

AINSLEE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

Vol. XIV

AUGUST, 1904

No. 1

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, \$1.80

SINGLE COPIES, 15 CENTS

Monthly Publication issued by AINSLEE MAGAZINE CO., 156 Fifth Avenue, NEW YORK.

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Entered September 11, 1902, at New York as Second-class Matter, under Act of Congress of March 2, 1879.

Ainslee's for September

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

A
NEW
SERIAL
STORY



By
AGNES
AND
EGERTON
CASTLE

THE LATEST PHOTOGRAPH OF THE CASTLES

THE HEART OF LADY ANNE

By **AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE**

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AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE

A NEW story by these gifted authors must be considered an important event in literature. Their charm of style and delightfully interesting character drawing have endeared them to a very wide circle of readers both in this country and abroad. We are safe in pledging you a literary treat in "The Heart of Lady Anne," which we have been fortunate enough to secure for your entertainment.

AINSLEE'S

VOL. XIV.

AUGUST, 1904.

No. 1.

THE FLIGHT OF A MOTH

By Emily Post

CHAPTER I.

NEWPORT, June 8th.



ONLY three days more, and I sail! Louise, dear, can you believe it? It really sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? To think that I, who have scarcely been allowed to breathe, except the regulation so many times a minute—I, who have been completely suppressed all my life—am now as free as air to do exactly as I please! I now know how a poor, crawling worm must feel when he bursts the fetters of the cocoon, and, for the first time, spreads his great, glittering, butterfly wings.

I told Lucy just now that I thought this simile suited me exactly. Of course, she looked anxious at once, and exclaimed, reprovingly: "If you would only be content to play around in the sunshine as a butterfly, it would be all very well; but, like a moth, you want to fly to unknown thing in the darkness and burn yourself at every candle you can find."

She is perfectly right, I do—for, if I burn my wings, I shall have been very near the light; and I would rather be a burnt moth than a crawling worm!

Poor, conscientious Lucy! Left while scarcely more than a child herself with

the responsibility of a small hoyden like me, she certainly tried her best to do her full duty in bringing me up. So, with Lucy in America, and great-aunt and the convent in France, I should never have dreamed that lips could utter other words than admonitions, reproofs and maxims, had it not been for the occasional coddlings of my dear old nurse, Kate.

Oh, Louise, Louise! I don't believe anyone but you can imagine what it means to me to be free! I hardly care what the consequences may be; all I know is that I have been held down by all the conventionalities that can be conceived of on two continents; and that, if I am a moth, I cannot be too grateful to the fate that gave me my wings. If I am burnt to a crisp, I shall, at least, have flown to my end, not *crawled*.

If Lucy could read my thoughts she *would* have cause for anxiety! Do you realize, Louise, that I was only seventeen when I tucked up my hair, let down my dresses, and, imagining myself the princess in a fairy tale, was married?

And, since then, you surely must have guessed what my life has been! Many a time, when Jimmy was particularly domineering and impossible, I longed to go to you for advice and sympathy; but, while he lived, I felt that I could not, in loyalty, talk about him, even to you.

Besides, what good would it have done? I had to live my life as best I could.

As I think of it now, it is really pitiful that the two persons who cared most for me caused all my unhappiness—Lucy, by her conscientious efforts to bend my character into her rigid moral mold; Jimmy, through his desire to bend it to his still narrower worldly one.

He had gone everywhere, done everything there was to do, and was tired of it all. Everything I liked he was intolerant of. His idea of woman's sphere—or hemisphere, rather—was much like the emperor's "*küche, kirche und kinder*." He was everlastingly trying to get my lips glued into shape to say "prunes and prisms," until, as stone is worn away by constant dripping of water, my spirits gradually drooped under the incessant disapproval; and when he wrote me, as I was stopping with you, "Be very careful not to do anything that could be construed as 'fast,' because you bear my name," I felt like bolting with the first smiling and good-tempered Johnny that turned up. None turned up; it was sad, though true. I had not a single offer made me to bolt, so his honor was saved.

But when the news of his fearful accident came, then the first tenderness felt in five years welled up in my heart; and, during the few days that he lived, I would have given anything for the chance of trying to make things better.

Perhaps it was my fault, perhaps it was his; but we each brought out the worst in the other. His intolerance made me reckless and hard; my heedless, happy-go-lucky way aggravated and annoyed him.

The French say that the ideal condition for a woman would be to be born a widow; and that is nearly my case, as I am just now starting out upon what I feel to be a new life. And, with my trunks half packed, and my black dresses changed to colored ones, I really feel as if my own self had changed with my clothes.

As a last concession to Lucy, who does not want me to go to a hotel alone, even with Kate, I have taken an apartment in Paris, belonging to an

eminently respectable lady in reduced circumstances, who will attend to the running of it (and, I suppose, keep an eye on me), at so much a week and no bother. What else I shall do I only know vaguely; but I shall see as much as I can of some of my French school friends, and avoid, as much as possible, my French relations.

But, Louise, I tell you whom I *shall* see—Serge Orlofsky.

He has written me several times lately, to know if I am really going abroad, and asking where he can meet me.

The only good time I ever had was on that yachting trip when he went with us. He was so clever and amusing that Jimmy was a paragon of amiability during the whole trip.

I wonder if he will be as fascinating as my memory of him. Isn't it strange, Louise, there certainly does seem to be a fate that spins our destiny!

Serge, with his high title and position, his utter disregard of anything but his own whim and inclination, is *the* personality which exactly fits in with my present craving for amusement and excitement; and, most enchanting of all, he has an absolute contempt for my arch-enemy, Mrs. Grundy! Won't it be fun to see that disagreeable old marplot vanquished by his mightiness, Prince Serge Orlofsky, for the benefit of one who has hitherto been ground down by her?

Serge is a true philosopher—lives for to-day, believes in little, takes nothing seriously; sips all the pleasures of life as they come, but never drinks deeply enough to taste the dregs. He says, "Life is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel." This is not only his theory, but his practice. What other woman has at her beck and call a veritable fairy prince—one who is absolutely content with a loving friendship, not even wanting more?

I feel as though the whole earth were spread out before me, just for my pleasure; and I have an idea that it is going to be glorious! Think of it! To be young, free to go where I please, to do what I please, to be responsible to no one but myself! To have no one in the

world with the power to say, "I don't approve." They can say it, of course; Mrs. Grundy and her whole flock can hop around and stir up as much dust as they like, but I shall be quite out of their reach.

You know I always think aloud to you; and now that I have come, as it were, to the top of a hill, I like to look back a moment before running down the other side. I am sure it is because I have been so suppressed, so hushed up all my life, that I feel the wide earth is almost too small to hold me. I have promised faithfully to write you everything, and you know I *will*; so don't worry about what I am doing. This letter is to our correspondence what packing is to traveling. My past is packed, and I am ready to start on the future. I will write on the steamer.

Always devotedly,

GRACE.

CHAPTER II.

ON BOARD "DEUTSCHLAND."

Second Day Out.

Louise, dear, I am off, and everything so far is going beautifully. But to begin at the beginning:

There was a horrible jam of carriages crossing the ferry and on the steamship docks, and we were all wedged together like pieces of floating ice. Lucy drove me over, and gave me all the sisterly advice that she had forgotten, as well as repeating that which she had already given me during the last week. I was absent-mindedly answering "yes" to all she said, when my attention was attracted to the most rakishly fascinating face that I have ever seen. The possessor of it was peering out of the window of a Waldorf cab, his head cocked impertinently sideways, and each cross-ways-growing tuft of bristly hair seeming thrust out to telegraph additional messages to the little, active, interested brain behind the alert eyes.

"Now, what sort of a person might you be?" his whole attitude asked me distinctly; and then, after a moment, he turned with equally interested scrutiny to a steward carrying somebody's lug-

gage, and wondered what *that* might mean.

"Oh, you *dear!*" I said, aloud. "I wonder who *you* are? You are the most attractive yellow dog I have ever seen."

"Grace, will you stop gazing at all the animals you see, and listen to what I am telling you?"

"I am listening, Lucy. I am to go and amuse myself by being ordered around by great-aunt, spend my days with Kate and a Baedeker studying the galleries, be home every night at seven, not forget to wear rubbers when it rains—"

"I do wish you would take things seriously, and not be so silly," sighed Lucy. "You are becoming more reckless all the time. Heaven only knows where your foolishness will lead you!"

"There has to be one black sheep in every well-regulated family, Lucy; so you might as well stop worrying about this one."

I said good-by to her, though, with much more sympathy. Why is it that I always say silly things to her that I am sorry for afterwards? I really love her dearly, but I *do* wish she would let me alone!

After I left her, and was making my way up the gangplank, the jaunty head-on-one-side little Irish terrier was trotting airily at the heels of a very tall, broad-shouldered, loose-jointed figure in a long, gray ulster. By the time I reached the deck, the long, gray figure turned, and I recognized Lord Kirth, the Earl of Haworth's eldest son, who got the V. C. in India.

I was very glad to see him again, and he, too, seemed delighted that I was going over.

"But the yellow one—where did you get him?" I exclaimed.

"Why, that's Paddy!" he said, as though no further explanation could be necessary. "Paddy, say how do you do to Mrs. Trevis."

Paddy turned his full attention to me for a minute, gave a little "wouf!" in obedience to his master; but his look said plainly: "Oh, pshaw! I have seen you before!"

As we were talking, Mrs. Charlie

Stone asked both Lord Kirth and me to sit at her table. She never noticed Paddy, but there was no detail about her that escaped *his* notice.

It is unusually amusing on board—lots of people I know; and our table is very jolly.

The most interesting to me are the Vicomte Villon and his bride. The bride can't speak French, but his English is very good, and he is continually making devoted and complimentary little speeches to her, which seem to please her greatly. I can't quite make out whether he is an adoring husband on his honeymoon, or whether it is harvest-moon with him, as it is the usual international match. She is the daughter of a Chicago butcher, very handsome, elaborately over-dressed, and with a backing as rich as her clothes and her "Rs."

"You know, 'popper' gives me everything I want, and if I want to marry 'Armong,' that is my business. Chicago is good enough for him; but, if I like Europe, he wants to have me shine in the top bunch of the nobility!"

Fancy the dowager vicomtesse with this "bull" in her china shop of rare Sévres and old Chinese!

Their best man, De Rchette, is very voluble and polite, and talks the prettiest conversation, in French as smooth and even as the notes of a violin. His hair is crimped by the barber, and he is powdered like a woman, so he only comes on deck in good weather.

The Cortland Peabodys and Count de Mathinquien, who has been sketching in America, complete the list. Mathinquien is an extraordinary person, and is himself a far greater caricature than his cartoons, with his grotesque attitudes and his penetrating voice, with which he holds forth on big I and ME and no *you* at all. He is clever, but his wit is directed toward the unnatural and distorted, and no subject is too bizarre for his pen. He thinks he is a student of nature; yet he worships only its freaks—himself.

It was rough at first, and the boat seemed half empty; but it is filling rapidly with a wilted mass of humanity.

I have an inexpressible desire to spray the row of bundled mummies with a rose sprinkler, to see if it will not freshen them up a bit. (I suppose they only wish I could.) It must be miserable to be seasick. Really, I feel rather brutal to be so well. You know how I love the water, and all the kinks go out of my temper and into my hair. I sleep like a baby, and never miss a meal. That is saying a lot, as the meals are a trial which nothing short of an un-failing digestion and an inexhaustible patience could endure. We do nothing but have meals all day, and they make each one last as long as possible. They feed us on the Wagnerian principle—a *motif* for each course. The band strikes up, and soup rolls in to the overture from "Faust." Fish is made to swim in to the "Blue Danube." The roast is coaxed in, in its turn, by "Viens Pou-poule," etc.—a course to a tune. If you miss the tune, you miss the course; and you have no hope of soup if the band is playing "God Save the Queen" or "Die Wacht am Rhein," as those airs are inseparable from coffee and cigarettes.

The trumpet's call is sounding now—and Lord Kirth is pulling off my rugs for me to emerge and descend.

SATURDAY.

I wonder how many miles a day Lord Kirth walks! It seems to me that, no matter when I look up from my book or my writing, I can always see the long gray and the little yellow figures pacing the deck. They passed just as I wrote this. Lord Kirth walks with that long, easy gait that apparently uses no effort, and fairly demolishes ground. Rather different from the way he used to go about on crutches the time he and I stopped at the Beverleys three years ago. Then he was white and ill, and home on sick leave; and now he is the picture of health and brown from two years' traveling. He is on his way home after having been around the world seeing all he could see, like Rikki Tikki, the mongoose; and if there was anything he missed, I am sure Paddy saw it for him. He has been through

Arabia, Persia, Thibet and China, then to Arizona to see a mine of which he is part owner; and he was so fascinated with the wild ranch life that he stayed and played cowboy for six months. He grows intensely enthusiastic when he is interested, and he has talked to me for hours about his trip—especially the life out West. How healthy and free and natural an existence it was—rough, crude, comfortless, of course; but it was living in the heart of nature and her people.

I forgot you don't know what he is like—do you? Except that he is very tall and very nice. Those are really the chief things about him; but, as you adore details, here they are: He is not particularly good-looking, but he has as good a figure as I have ever seen, and an air of distinction that makes most people look at him twice. His eyes are his most noticeable feature; not that they are particularly beautiful, but they make the strongest impression in remembering him. Whoever invented the story about the power of human eyes over wild animals must have had Lord Kirth's in mind. They always look straight at one—even more, they look straight through one! It would be almost impossible to evade their questioning. I am sure Paddy thinks so, too; he does not even try. Clever little rogue that he is!

This morning Lord Bobby was talking to me for a long time (by Lord Bobby I mean Lord Kirth; for, although it is, of course, not his title, it is the nickname by which he is best known to his friends), and Paddy, deciding that he was not going to be exercised any more for the present, turned his inquisitive nose in other directions.

If Paddy should suddenly talk, it would in no way surprise me; the real wonder is that he does not. And what a brogue it would be! For if ever there was a gay, devil-may-care Irish spirit with all the wildest and most subtle depth under an apparent ingenuousness, it is in this same Paddy, whose heart is as big as his wiry little body, and every bit of it in the keeping of his master. Outside of Lord Bobby, his

conduct to the human race is that of a perfectly unprincipled scamp.

The Chicago vicomtesse came on deck, very much upset because her husband was continually being led into the poker games through De Rachette. De Rachette only lives to gamble—for any stakes, on any thing, at any game, at any time.

"Ah, Monte Carlo!" and he kisses his finger tips. "I do but exist until I return there once more. Every winter I go, and the rest of the year I wait until I can go again."

"Come, Armand, my friend," one can hear him say at almost any hour of the day, "we will get some of these Americans to play their delightful poker game, yes?" and, linking his arm in that of the vicomte, he drags him off.

The bride watched them disappear into the smoking room, resentment in every feature.

"I think he ought to be run in! The way he leads off my husband is outrageous! Armong is so obliging, he never refuses him anything."

"Not if it is a question between M. de Rachette and you?" asked Lord Bobby.

The bride flushed with a happy little self-consciousness, as she answered: "Then I win, I s'pose! You know, I get cross because De Rachette wants Armong to play all the time, and I hate to make myself disagreeable by objecting, because I am awfully lucky to have such a husband. There was a man at home that popper wanted me to marry. Popper thinks he is very smart, and will make his way in the world. I liked him, too, until I met Armong; and then, somehow, the Chicago young man looked all hands and feet. Armong is so elegant, and thinks of such beautiful things to say. I don't want to settle down in America, only seeing my husband when he comes home tired for dinner, and then hearing him talk about nothing but hogs and wheat. I am crazy about books and learning, and I think it will be just grand to walk through baronial halls with Armong, and hear improving conversations about literature and art. But, oh, dear!" She

hesitated and looked appealingly at Lord Bobby. "How am I ever going to learn enough to keep my end up? I have read Ruskin's 'Modern Painters' and 'Stones of Venice' and Carlyle's 'Revolution'; now, what would you advise next?"

"Well—er—I don't know exactly," said Lord Kirth. "I should think it would be most important to speak languages."

"Oh, Armong gives me French lessons every day, and I write regular exercises—that reminds me, I haven't written to popper yet! Dear old popper! I guess I'll go do it now." And off she went.

"She is an awfully nice woman," remarked Lord Bobby. "I like her."

Her idea that European society is a sort of recitation room for classes in art and literature has made quite an impression on me. I wonder how she will look at things when she finds out what they really are? I should like to see her at a big French house party; it would be very interesting—a little sad, perhaps. I am afraid she is going to have a pretty hard path to climb, and that the baronial halls of her dreams will be very frigid.

It will be a difficult assimilation, this new bride with the old family. Jeanne de la Tour comes before my mind (she is Armand's cousin). I can't imagine a greater contrast than this Chicago girl and the French woman. Jeanne has too sweet a nature ever to let the bride feel the difference, but the other relations may not be so forbearing.

I really wish I knew how to help her; not because I like her particularly, but because we are both Americans, and I hate to see a fellow countrywoman snubbed.

Still, as I said, Lord Bobby likes her, very decidedly; and, if he does, probably others will, too.

As for him, he is the most charming man I have ever met—except Serge, perhaps. Each day he has spent a little longer time sitting or walking with me, and the hours have flown.

I wish you were here; he is just the sort of man you would like. The Chicago vicomtesse says, "He is all wool

and a yard wide." I think she describes him perfectly.

WEDNESDAY.

I certainly *do* like Lord Kirth. I believe in him. He inspires me with more confidence than anyone I have ever known; although, for myself, I rebel at his serious views of life—of what people ought to be and do. He is perfectly unconscious of his own ego; he never feels his own superiority, and he never preaches. He has the broad-mindedness, tolerance, sympathy and complete understanding characteristic of big natures. He never asks you why you do this or say that; he knows, and you know he knows, and that is the flower of congeniality.

Yesterday we sat way out in the bow by ourselves, the whole afternoon, and talked of our ideas and plans (love and marriage, of course). He has the exalted idea of marriage of one who has never tried it, and even the word "wife" in his mind has a halo around it.

"What is it you want to do?" he asked me. "And what are all these things you seem to rebel against?"

"I don't want anything in particular," I answered, "except to have a good time. Youth does not last long; and, when I am old, I want to have a 'past' worth living in. You see," I said, flipantly, "I want to be busy in the present, making a past for the future. The only thing I rebel against is marriage. Of course, I realize the institution of marriage is excellent for the domestic breed of women—those who are interested in making yesterday's roast into hash, and seeing that Mary Jane has cleaned down the back stairs on Friday."

Lord Bobby sat puffing his inevitable cigarette, and his eyes twinkled a little.

"I'm not interested in the least in these things," I continued; "domestic details bore me. My only domestic instinct is that I love new-born things—a puppy, or a baby, anything helpless and brand-new—but the responsibility of bringing a soul into the world would terrify me. For nothing on this earth would I marry again! I don't even want anyone to fall in love with me—

THE FLIGHT OF A MOTH

not seriously. A man in love is the most stupid bore on earth. To be interested in a person makes one appear at one's very best and brightest; but love dulls everything except egotism and jealousy!"

"Bad as all that? But we *are* pessimistic to-day!" he said, between tightened lips, as he lighted another cigarette. "You hate marriage, that's *one*," and he counted off on his fingers; "and love, that's *two*—and what else?" He waited holding up his third finger.

"I hate the word 'duty,'" I continued, vehemently, "and the warning to be careful of what people might *think* is like a red rag to a bull. I don't care a rap what Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Smith has to say, if I know that I am all right myself. Look around on all sides—people in English, French, and even some in American society, stop at nothing, as long as they are *not found out*. That is, there may be all the scandal you like, so long as it is not discovered." I stopped for breath. "My motto is, never mind what you *appear* to do if you are all right—'To thine own self be true; and it must follow as the night the day—'"

"But, my dear friend," he interrupted, "that is just the point! You are *not* true to yourself, when you put yourself in a position that could be questioned. Theoretically, you are right; it ought to be possible for a woman to live the independent life a man lives, without the odium that would attach itself to her; but, practically, it is impossible. Women are like gardenias; to keep their perfect beauty, they must not be touched. Men are like hardy thistles; in an encounter, they are apt to wound their opponent without the slightest damage to themselves. You may despise conventionality, but you cannot escape it. You are of the world, and you must conform to the conditions of the position in which you belong. The eleventh commandment, 'Thou shalt not be found out,' is despicable—I agree with you; but, nevertheless, it is the one thing you cannot get away from. You have to avoid the appearance of doing questionable things, even if you are absolutely

innocent, because the world has not time to judge by anything but appearances."

"Listen to me," I said. "You know me only fairly well—and yet, you would believe in me, wouldn't you? Well, then, so would all those who know me and are fond of me; and what difference does it make what those think who don't know me? The world in general does not think at all, or else hopes for the worst."

He smiled at me in a way that somehow made me feel as though I were about two years old, and he said: "Don't pretend to be what you are not. In the first place, it is silly; in the second, it is unworthy of the *real* you!"

A little while later he looked at me intently for a few minutes, and asked, seriously: "Can't you, with your imagination and temperament, appreciate what it might be to be really in love?"

"Yes," I answered; "the trouble is that I imagine it so vividly I have no hope of the realization. Rodin's statue of 'The Kiss'—as I interpret it—is my idea of love. Those two locked in each other's arms, out on a rock in the middle of the ocean—his muscles strained in keeping his foot on the slippery rock. They are marooned, cold, wet, uncomfortable—and they don't even know it!"

The setting sun was glowing over and under great chains of clouds, giving the effect of countries and cities of gold and light stretching out over space unmeasurable.

We sat for some time in silence, and my thoughts strayed far into the golden cities. Finally, I said, in a very low voice, as much to myself as to my companion:

"I more than half believe that when a soul is created, its mate is created at the same time. Somewhere in space is the perfect complement of each being, mentally and physically. And when the great end is accomplished, the fulfillment of which we owe to our creation, then maybe we shall be united to our other selves. There are, perhaps, some rare fortunates who have met their true mates on this little earth; but for most of us there is no such love as that outside our imagination."

"You are quite sure you have never seen anyone who could possibly be your perfect mate?" he asked me, searchingly and slowly.

"Very sure," I answered, sadly, "since I hate marriage. If I knew what it was to be 'in love,' I wouldn't feel as I do, would I?"

He looked away from me, and out on the horizon and the dying day. His voice was a little unsteady, and his eyes seemed deeper and behind a veil.

"I wonder," he said, "if one could bear the happiness of living the life that is idealized from one's imagination and heart? It's better to put it aside, and to take up the dull task assigned; for, after all, if such had been meant for us, it might have been given; as it was denied, we are probably not fit for it."

For some time I sat and gazed at the setting sun. I must have been carried away by the mental pictures we had been painting. If I am going to get chöky over my own imaginings, I shall be as bad as Mathiniquien.

We were so quiet Paddy evidently thought something must be wrong. Both yellow front paws went up on the gray shoulder, and the little black nose rubbed itself tenderly against the cheek of the master.

"You are right, Paddy, old boy—the love of a true Irish heart like yours is, perhaps, all a man ought to need."

At this moment Mrs. Peabody came up very much excited over the preparations for the captain's dinner.

"Lots of people have on low dresses; do come, Grace, and look at them."

Time for dinner, and I went to change my blouse.

SATURDAY.

We land now in a little while, so I must end this volume. Most of the people I know got off at Plymouth, where we arrived at dawn. This morning Lord Bobby sent me a note of good-bye—or, rather, two notes. The first was from Paddy, thanking the kind lady who had befriended him in his misery, and was signed with an inky paw mark. In the second, Lord Bobby hoped I would have a glorious time and find my

freedom "one glad, sweet song"; but that, if I ever needed a friend, to remember that he would always be ready to help me in any way in his power. It was dear of him, and just like him; but why, I wonder, did he think of my *needing* help? It is probably only his way of writing a "nice note." What do you think? Always lovingly,

GRACE.

CHAPTER III.

HOTEL VENDOME,
THURSDAY, June 18th.

LOUISE, DEAR: Such an experience! I wanted excitement—I got it! Don't write me at the apartment that sounded so nice and comfortable, as I am down at the Vendôme. But to go back to my arrival.

The ride from Cherbourg was the worst trip I have ever taken. We landed at twelve, and went aboard the train. Then they shunted us off on a sidetrack, and there we stayed until six; and we got to Paris at two-thirty A. M. By the time my luggage had been put outside, and myself inside, an omnibus, it was three-thirty, and we rattled off over the deserted streets in the cold, gray light of early dawn. I wondered if this dead, ghastly city could really be Paris. The horses' hoofs clumped over the resonant wooden pavements, and the solitary sounds echoed back from the street walls. Not a sign of life did we meet; not even a street lamp was awake.

We drew up finally before the prepossessing façade of a typical French apartment house. Its cream-colored eyelids were all drawn down, and the iron-grilled doorway was locked.

The "*cocher*" pulled the bell; no answer. Again; no answer. Again—and behind the iron tracery appeared a half-asleep, and less than half-dressed *concierge*, carrying a candle.

In answer to my inquiry for Mme. Charlier, he opened the grille. We drove into the passage which leads to the courtyard, and, without a word, he helped the driver unload my boxes. After which he made not the slightest move to show me the way. He just blinked

at me over his flickering candle, while the shadows playing on his features looked as though he were making faces. I stood by the glass door leading to the main-stair hall, and finally said, quite sharply: "Well! Are you not going to open?"

"She is not of the front one; come this way," he answered, and shuffled off across the courtyard at the back of which loomed a second building—a great, black pile in the vague light; while out of the angles and corners darted spooky shadows.

He put us in a lift—a slow, automatic affair that groaned ("ch-click" before it reached a story, and "chi-clun-ng" after it passed one). I looked up to see where the remorseless iron box was taking us, and I grabbed Kate's arm in terror at the sight.

Way up in the darkness gleamed a single light, and in that light was framed a mass of tousled hair and a fiendish grin—a maniac's head! What could all this horror mean? Clearly we had got in a lunatic asylum. The *conciierge* certainly seemed stupid—he must be mad; and here we were, making straight for the very floor on which "Bedlam Jane" was waiting for us! "Chi-kick-ctchwang!" and I was on the landing!

"Bedlam Jane" was a little woman; at any rate, Kate and I could easily manage her before the keeper came, if no more got loose. But her looks were enough to frighten anybody; her hair, half of which was piled on her head and the other half streaming about in every direction, was gray for two inches next her scalp, and then melted into canary yellow. Her eyes were great smudges, and the powder had been laid on so thick that it had dusted off like a cape over the shoulders of her black dress.

She washed her hands in the air, screwed her face into an ingratiating smile, and drawled, in a voice she might have used in coaxing a pet animal:

"It is Madame Trevis? But—how you are beautiful!—how you are young! I expected a lady more respectable! But you are hungry?" Whereupon she showed me into her *salon*.

A little table lighted by old candelabra was attractively set with the inevitable chicken and salad, bread and claret.

In the better light I looked my hostess over again. The make-up was simply plastered on, and she had evidently rubbed her eyes to keep awake, which gave them their smudgy look. But she spoke with the smooth, even rhythm and throaty "r" of the Parisian, which always delights me. Also she did not seem crazy. Her awful appearance was, after all, only a pathetic attempt on the part of an old mutton to appear lamb-fashion.

I ate a little chicken, and then asked her to show me my apartment. As I spoke, she put her finger on her lips.

"Softly, please," she said; "there are young girls sleeping here."

Across the outer hall, she opened the door into another apartment. Here was my *salon*—my maid's room next; but here—"What are all these things in my bath room?"

"Ah! those—those must be the clothes of Signor A—. He has evidently taken his bath."

"Evidently!" I said. "But I don't want him in my tub! And where does this door go?"

"Monsieur *Un-tel* is on this side of you, Monsieur *Un-autre* is on the other side; so, you see, you need not feel lonely. If there is anything I can do for you, I am entirely at your disposition." And she left me.

I looked at Kate. She had understood no word of Mme. Charlier's conversation, but her face was such a picture of fright, indignation and woe, that the tears went back in my head again and the lumps melted out of my throat. I actually laughed. "Get to bed, Kate; I am tired. We will go away from here to-morrow."

When I awoke it was past noon. Kate brought me a tray nicely set, and, as I sat up in an old-fashioned bed, with a really delicious cup of coffee and fresh country eggs, I wondered how much of the last night's horror was real and how much imaginary.

The room was very comfortable, with bright chintz hangings, and the win-

dows opened on a balcony overlooking a lovely garden. This was not so bad, if the *salon* was pretty; but when I saw it! As French taste is the most refined and beautiful, so is French vulgarity the most extreme. The poor, little room, with its pale, insignificant wall paper and delicate, frail Louis XVI. moldings, was loaded down to its utmost capacity with great gilt lumps of furniture, until it was fairly groaning with acute indigestion. I felt as though I had been swallowing lumps of butter myself, to look at it.

Oh, why did I ever come to this place? And how was I to get away? I had taken it for three weeks, and I have a horror of the French law. I wondered if anyone could *make* me stay. Also, I hated to hurt "Bedlam Jane's" feelings. Kate said she was evidently a kind old soul, and had been fussing about all the morning to see what she could do to make me comfortable. But a rear apartment house, and all the queer impressions of the night before! I really *could not* stay!

I was just dressed when the *bonne* announced that *déjeuner* was served in the dining room.

"Oh, have I a dining room? Which way?" In Mme. Charlier's apartment! I did not like *that* idea, and I thought that, if I should stay, I would much prefer not crossing the dividing hall. The maid opened a door, and I found myself standing before a long table, with a strange collection of sixteen or twenty people. Mme. Charlier was presiding, and motioned to an empty place as mine. I was so dumfounded I stood like an idiot, and then sat down, without a word, and stared at my lap. The kind-hearted (or villainous) hostess presented each person to me. If the circumstances had been different—if I had voluntarily, for the sake of "local color," chosen to go and take a meal of that kind—it might have amused me; but, with the doubt as to how I could get away, my sense of humor entirely forsook me, and I was frightened—as one would be if one were spoken to by some one in the street. On my right was a greasy-looking Italian, smelling of cheap

perfume and cheaper tobacco. He actually ogled me, and made odious and facetious remarks. On my other side was a vulgar woman, with three girls of uncertain age strung out beside her. Two Frenchmen sat opposite me; one a puffy-faced, three-chinned, three-hundred-pound creature, and the other—by far the most passable person at the table—was evidently a photographer. Two French soubrettes, one quite pretty, and some nondescript creatures, filled up the rest of the table. I thought of Alice in Wonderland when she found herself on the edge of the pool of tears, with the queer party of birds; and I would have been glad to change places with her. Any kind of animals would be better than these humans.

If I could have gone into the kitchen and breakfasted with the *bonne*! Or even with the grooms in the stable! But this staring, impertinent, aggressive crowd of the middle class, with their vulgar self-complacency and patronizing familiarity! My cheeks burned, and my fingers were so cold I could hardly manage my knife and fork. They plied me with questions. The woman on my left asked when I left the "States."

"The madame keeps such an elegant house!" she gushed. "This is the very swellest part of the city; and isn't the food lovely? Was you ever here before? You seem kind of strange; but it is really homey here at madame's, and we'll show you round. There's nothing about Paris I don't know—I done it all up the first week I come." I did not say anything, and she kept on. "How do you fix your hair like that? Do you crimp it? Is that the natural color? That is a tasty dress you have on. My great friend, Mrs. Simson, from New York—do you know Mrs. Simson? You don't? I thought you would; she moves in the swellest society. Well, Mrs. Simson is just an elegant dresser."

When she could get no response beyond an occasional "yes" or "no," she gave up talking *to* me and talked *at* me, instead. Her eyes were riveted on my fingers. "It is wonderful," she remarked, sniffing the air, "how they do

make imitation jewelry nowadays. If you ain't a sharp judge, you'd be fooled, like as not."

I got up suddenly and left the table. I hated myself for a snob as much as they possibly could have hated me; but to stay a second longer in that company was more than I could stand. One thing was certain—I was going away at once. How to do it with the least friction—that was the question! I put on my hat and decided to go down and see if I could get rooms at the Vendôme. As I was leaving my room, I met Mme. Charlier, who handed me a letter with a great deal of manner—no doubt on account of the coronet on the back.

I don't know why, but I felt instinctively that *this* would be, in some way, a deliverance; and it was genuine inspiration that prompted my exclamation: "Ah! from my aunt! I was very anxious about her!"

The letter was, in reality, from Count Tyrniz, telling me that he had arrived at the Elysée Palace Hotel, and was waiting to know when I would receive him. He begged that I would consider him entirely at my service; and "agreed" with all the usual "salutations."

I drove to the Vendôme, and found, to my delight, that the apartment we always used to have was vacant. Then I sent a *commissaire* up to Tyrniz, asking him to come as soon as possible to "help me out of a difficulty," to show no surprise at anything, and to *agree with everything* I might say.

Then I went home and unfolded my scheme to Kate. "You see, Kate, I am pretending this is a letter from Aunt Mary." (I had an aunt who married a German, and who died when I was tiny; but I invested the imaginary one with the real one's personality.) "And Aunt Mary is very much worried over my being here alone, and is coming to Paris at once. She is to arrive at the Vendôme, and will insist that I go and stop with her there. (Because, Kate, we must get out of this place.) Count Tyrniz is her son—therefore, my cousin—I expect him to fetch me any moment." I had no time to go into any further details, as I was interrupted by

a friendly visit from my well-meaning and would-be-sociable landlady.

I was on pins and needles with excitement. I expected the genuine Tyrniz and pseudo cousin any moment, and was wondering how I was to carry out this pet project of my imagination if my "dear cousin" appeared and clicked his heels together, kissed my hand with utmost formality, and called me "madame."

I heard the elevator (*chi-kick-ctching!*). He was there! How could I change his manner? Kate opened the door, and I rushed at him suddenly; he hadn't time to breathe. With both hands outstretched, I fairly screamed: "Ah, there thou art, my *dear* cousin!"

I must say he *was* a dear. He stood and shook my hands hard, and remained gasping and perfectly speechless while his eyes looked at me in dumb, questioning amazement. Louise, my dear, it was too funny! I could hardly keep my face straight. The first impression of that house seemed to be of a lunatic asylum, and surely he thought me crazy. Mme. Charlier relieved the strain by going away, and I explained my position and plan of escape. He was certainly awfully nice about it—the way he let me take his mother's name in vain. He went with me to tell Mme. Charlier the sad, sad tale.

I put on my most naïve baby-stare, and used the most pathetic voice I could assume.

"I was so sorry—but *what* could I do about it? You see, 'aunt' has lived so long abroad, she does not look at things the way we do. She is very European in her views about women, and she thinks it is *dreadful* that I should be in Paris without a proper chaperon. And she has come all the way from Vienna to look after me. It was *such* a pity! Mme. Charlier was so kind, so attentive! But aunt *insisted* on my joining her. No; she could not *very well come here* (in my imagination I tried to picture the Countess Tyrniz at the lunch table), because she is quite an invalid, and always takes the same rooms at the Vendôme. I have talked it all over with my cousin—thou knowest, Otto,

it gives me much pain to leave, when madame is so amiable; but aunt has sent thee for me, and, of course, I must go."

So then he took up the thread, and said *he* was very sorry. Madame was most kind, but that his cousin must leave with him. Then madame paid me all sorts of compliments in return; said that her house had never had anyone so charming and elegant—in fact, of "the world," etc. I felt sorry to think of what a trick I was playing; and yet my *real* reason for the whole fabrication (though, perhaps, I adored giving loose rein to my imagination) was simply to avoid hurting her feelings, which I certainly would have done if I said I was leaving because she kept a boarding house of questionable boarders, and that I was so out of place I could not stand it, even for a few days. I have always said *Toujours la politesse, jamais la vérité* might be the motto of the French people. This time I tried it myself—with great success.

We parted most amiably. She told me that she would always remember with great joy the few hours that such a distinguished relative of the nobility had spent beneath her roof.

As for me, I am so glad to be here in the little *salon* I am used to, and to feel myself in my own surroundings, that I am perfectly happy. There is just one thing I want to know. Where on earth did Lucy *ever* hear of such a place? Please don't tell her, as I want to break the news myself verbally, so I can watch her expression. I would not miss it for worlds. I hardly expected such a disagreeable beginning; but everything is coming out beautifully now. Daisy and George are at the Ritz around the corner, and they and Tyrniz and I dined together to-night; but, as I was tired, we went nowhere afterwards, and I came back early. I meant to go to bed at once, and here it is nearly one o'clock, and I am scribbling my beauty sleep away to you. But now I must to bed. Good-night, dear.

GRACE.

P.S.—My only trouble is Tyrniz—he thinks he is *still* my cousin.

CHAPTER IV.

HOTEL VENDOME, PARIS,

June 25th.

"Will you walk into my parlor?" said the spider to the fly. Louise, dear, the original spider was a French dress-maker, and the fly an American woman. Just why the spider web is supposed to be a haven of delight is something I can never understand. I always come out of their clutches exhausted by the struggle of my own personality against the meshes of flattery and "*le dernier cri*" of fashion.

You sit for hours while the fifty models are paraded before you, until your mind becomes a perfect kaleidoscope; and, in your dazed condition, you choose as "perfectly sweet" dresses that you would have thought hideous two hours before.

But the choosing is the best part of it. The fittings are awful! You come again and again. The "*vendeuse*," Mlle. Bertha, greets you smilingly and escorts you into a handbox of a sitting room; takes your dress off, and then leaves you. You wait a few moments in faith and patience, and then put your head out of the door to plead with another "*vendeuse*" you see passing to send your fittings.

The answer to this is that *vendeuse* number two shrieks at the top of her voice: "Mlle. Berthe! Madame impatient herself!" Mlle. Berthe takes up the echo, and screams back: "Am I not waiting for the fitter?" And then the fitter's voice breaks in: "How can I be in two places at once? I have four fittings here!" Mlle. Berthe stands in your doorway. "I have it on my card. Madame was to be fitted at eleven o'clock." "Not at all," screams another voice; "that is Mme. Brown's time!" And they all yell and chatter together until it becomes pandemonium let loose.

Finally it subsides. Mlle. Berthe comes in to calm you. "They will be here in one moment. *Ah, que madame a une jolie taille!* Where does madame buy her corsets? Is it possible they can make like that in America? But anything would be beautiful on madame's

figure. Madame is so *élégante!*" etc., and so it goes on. Every time you suggest that they hurry your fitting pandemonium breaks out. They just scream out their sentences, like parrots on their perches. Finally the fitter comes, and the subject of madame's beautiful "figure" and "corsets" is all gone over as a duet. I suppose "madame's" cue is to smile and be pleased; but I was exceedingly cross this morning, and when they started in on "*que madame a une jolie*" I broke in on them. "Oh, that! I know it perfectly well; I have the most beautiful figure that ever was or will be!" I am sure they both swallowed pins in their astonishment. When I left, a buxom matron who was made like a string of globes succeeded to my fitting room. I suppose in fifteen minutes the "corset and figure" duet would be reeled off for her benefit.

As I went through the salesroom on my way out, I saw the Chicago vicomtesse surrounded by mountainous piles of models, and she was apparently ordering everything in the shop.

"Oh, hello, Mrs. Trevis! How aw-r-r you? Arrn't the gowns here just too stunning for anything?"

"They are lovely things," I said; but I did not care in the least to talk about dresses. I wanted to know what she thought of the French people she had met, especially the women.

She seemed to be principally impressed by the plainness of their clothes.

"I always thought countesses and people like that, especially French ones, dressed so elegantly that they made the fashion papers look like thirty cents."

"And don't you think they do?" I asked, very much interested.

"Good gracious, no! Why, most of them dress so that you would never notice them twice!"

In answer to my questions of how she liked her new relations-in-law, she told me with great cheerfulness and delicious frankness: "This joining a foreign family is not all it is cracked up to be; and I must say that somehow I have not got the hang of things yet. These people kind of worry me; I can't tell where I stand. They are awfully polite

and all that, but they don't make me feel a bit at home, or as if I should ever get to know them. I have a horrid feeling as of being up for exhibition, and as though they were taking notes of everything I do or say. As for Armong's mother, she scares me stiff! There is nothing I can put my fingers to, either, as she is perfectly lovely; but I somehow feel as if I were standing outside of a house of which the blinds are all pulled down, and I can't get an idea of what it is like inside."

Fortunately for her, most of her new relations speak very little English, and have no idea of the quality of hers. However, even if they could understand her slang, perhaps it would not matter, as they would consider it simply another evidence (like her clothes) of American barbarism.

We are suspiciously the same to them. If we are everything we ought to be, and they can find no fault, they think to themselves: "That is all very well for to-day, but she may break out at any moment." They are always on the *qui-vive* lest we give an Indian war whoop. (Of course, this is an exaggeration; but, really, not so much of one as it sounds.)

"Have you met Jeanne de la Tour yet?" I asked.

"No, not yet. I am crazy to see her; she must be the real thing."

I don't know what she meant by "real thing"; but whatever it was, I am sure she will not be disappointed in Jeanne.

I think I also sympathize with the bride about the trials of belonging to a French family. I had to dine with great-aunt once, and I am going to Cousin Annette's to-morrow. That finishes my duty to the family. I know of nothing more trying than dinner at great-aunt's. And this one was the usual state function, although there was no one there but the *curé*, an old maid from England, and M. de Piron, who might be a nice old man if he ever dared express an opinion without first looking at great-aunt, to see if he might. Poor little man! I don't see how he stands it. If he disagrees with her, she asks him how he dares contradict her.

If he agrees with her, then she scolds him for having no opinion of his own.

When dinner was at last over, and M. de Piron had "handed" great-aunt back to her "chair of state" in the drawing room, I sat for at least an hour, it seemed to me, answering questions like a little girl saying her catechism; every question about my past, present and future was put to me; and, when I got through, I was told my whole course of behavior and present position was shocking and scandalous. She did not think I had been brought up so loosely. Certainly, my grandmother must disapprove of me. Here was this odious word "disapprove" again. Can I never get away from it?

There was no use in trying to make her understand that it is *because* I have been brought up in the narrowest way that I am so broad. I can hardly keep on the straight path without knocking the fence down on both sides.

Fortunately, they soon began their game of whist; and, as they were four without me, I seized my chance and left.

Excepting the dressmakers and the family, I am having a beautiful time. These last days have danced away as though by magic. Daisy and I trot about all day, and we dine together nearly every evening. George is, of course, hopelessly dull, and hardly an addition to any party; but he is perfectly amiable and good-natured, and would try to pull the moon out of the sky if Daisy asked for it. As husbands go, he is really a pretty nice one. We dine and go to the play every evening. Generally to the music halls or "*Revue*," as George does not understand a word of French. Tyrniz and another Austrian, Von Weissen, have literally put themselves "at our disposal." In fact, they come to see me every morning "for orders."

Last night we went to the *Fête de Neuilly*; almost exactly like Coney Island. They have merry-go-rounds, side shows and shooting galleries; but the nearest thing to our adorable "chutes" is what they call a "*Montagne Russe*." It is a rick-rack railroad with little cars, just big enough for two. For

those who have never known the genuine Coney Island in its native perfection, the French imitation is, perhaps, thrilling. To me it was reminiscent and delightful. The good-natured crowd swarmed like school children at recess. Everywhere we saw happy couples wandering about hand-in-hand, or even with arms about one another, and nearly all carrying big, bright-colored paper flowers on long sticks. All seemed turned to sweethearts, and those few who were alone had the spirit of *bonne camaraderie* and a laugh and a quick answer for every occasion. One man patted Daisy's cheek as he passed us, and lots called out chaffing or endearing words.

Each side of the street swarmed with attractions, and we did everything there was to do. We rode the pigs, which certainly was a test of our ability to withstand dizziness from motion or sight, as they not only swing around like all carousels, but pull up and down like the bow of a pitching ship, while mirrors twist on all sides before one's whirling eyes, and the steam calliope pounds one's remaining senses into pulp.

At a shooting gallery George won a whole handful of variegated walking sticks with tin tops. He was so pleased that it was hard work to get him away from the place.

Von Weissen and Daisy tried the Ferris wheel. As they were coming down, they called out that they were dizzy. They looked so anxious to get off George thought it a good joke to keep them in it. By paying the man, he made them go around *four* times! I thought it was pretty mean of him, as Daisy looked on the verge of tears, but George thought it very funny—a good example of man's density, as he would not intentionally cause her a qualm.

And then we went down the *Montagne Russe*. Tyrniz had never seen a chute, and was quite excited at the thought of a novelty. When he and I got in the car and the starter ordered monsieur to pay attention that madame did not slide off by putting one arm around madame's waist, he fairly shook with excitement and delight. He had hardly time to obey, when, Ch-t! we

were off! He was so pleased, he kept on gasping "*Ah! que c'est amusant—déloureux!*" and with each expression of delight his arm tightened around me. Not for anything would I go down the mountain with him again. It went straight to his "foolish spot." He did not know what he was doing after that. When we got in the carriage to drive down the avenue again, he wanted to kiss my fingers. "No? Cruel! When everyone else is so happy—everyone but me! I adore her! And I may not even kiss her fingers! Just *one* finger! One little lady finger—two little lady fingers! Not one single finger? No? Then her glove!" He took one of my gloves and rained kisses on it. Surely he was quite mad. George, not understanding a word, looked puzzled; but he was no more puzzled than Daisy and I. We were all under the spell of the fête and happy-go-lucky; but the punctilious, almost ceremonious, Count Tyrniz—he was another person. There he sat, as faultless in appearance as ever, kissing my glove, or my handkerchief; also my wrap, which he was carrying—anything of mine—and telling me and everybody how dejected he was, and how gay it ought to be, and how I would not even give him my fingers to kiss.

We left him at the entrance with Von Weissen and drove home. Perhaps he went down the *Montagne Russe* the rest of the night.

To-day he came to apologize; he was *very* formal; his ceremony would have been approved of, even by great-aunt. Said it must have been the green mint at Paillard's—it always affected him queerly and went to his head. He is a dear and a thoroughbred; but it was not *green mint* that went to his head last night!

JUNE 28th.

There is no doubt about it—this insidious city is slowly mounting to my brain. Adorable Paris! There is not another place like it in the world. To me it will always seem like a big theater; everyone is playing a part—a comedy part—with more smiles than lines. All the scenery is turned painted side out. The

calcium lights glare and the orchestra plays its merriest. But the great charm of it is that I am not in the audience, but on the stage; not only that, but I have one of the principal rôles. In no other place in the world do I feel this subtle flattery and its exhilaration.

Last night we went on a scouring expedition into all the hidden places—that is, they are supposed to be hidden from all *nice* women, but only too familiar to most *nice* men! I wonder why the details of the after-midnight life and the sights of the *demi-monde* have such a mysterious fascination for us—until we have seen them! As soon as a bride considers herself sufficiently a matron, she thinks her education neglected unless she has experienced a knowledge which no French woman would ever seek.

There is too little French in me to put me in the second class, and I have always had a keen curiosity to see what Jimmy would not let me. Daisy wanted to go as much as I did, and George was perfectly willing to take us; but he knew no more where to go or how to go than we did. So Von Weissen and Tyrniz offered themselves as guides. We were to dine with Tyrniz at Henri's, go to the *Alcazar d'Eté*, and then start out! They told us to wear simple gowns and no jewels. This sounded dangerous and thrilling.

I put on a black lace dress and hat; but when Daisy stopped for me, I found her all in black, too. We looked such crows, I took some roses out of a vase and stuck them in my belt.

Dinner was the everlasting menu—*purée de écrevisse*, sole with the sauce that tastes like caramel, and the squashed duck mess. Perfectly delicious, but so rich it is murdering my digestion, and I am beginning to feel as though I had been living on a diet of lard and broken oyster shells.

My eyes laughed a little, I think, at Tyrniz as he was placidly sipping his green mint through a straw.

"This is perfectly safe," he said, with the corners of his mouth twitching. "It is only 'Madrid' mint that goes to my head." And he ordered another.

At the Alcazar, Otero was as blazing, as brazen, as beautiful, and just as stupid an actress as always. She wore a skirt and two jeweled saucers held on with strings of pearls. Otherwise, she had nothing on. I don't know why they wear clothes on the French stage; nobody would mind if they didn't.

Lise Fleuron was vivacious, smiling, Parisian, *chic*, from her perfect golden coiffure to her open-work and spangled stockings, tripping about in her high-heeled slippers. The *Revue* was beautifully costumed, and bright and amusing with a running fire of repartee that could not be translated into polite English. What a difference language makes! In French one can listen, laugh, and think nothing of remarks which, if translated, would seem indecent vulgarity. I never realized it until I tried to tell George what the audience was laughing at. I wonder if this means that we are purer than they, or that they have "attained" beyond us? *Honi soit qui mal y pense!*

At about one o'clock we started for Montmartre. Von Weissen asked me to take my diamond comb out of my hair, also the only pin I had on, and he put them in his pocket; and, as we set out, I felt exactly as a schoolboy must when playing truant.

We went to the *Cabaret de la Mort*. Coffins were used as tables and tombstones as seats; and, by the use, I suppose, of magic-lantern slides, a man in a coffin actually appeared to get white and greenish, then decompose, and finally turn into a skeleton. When his features had nearly gone, somebody made him laugh. The effect was horrible. Of course, a woman had hysterics. It seemed too foolish, but the illusion was good. We also went to *Ciel* and *Enfer* and the *Rat Mort*. The *Café Blanc* was funny. It is a plain, middle-class restaurant; sand on the floor, and awful music. The people were all of the working classes, and mostly women. They wore short bicycle skirts or bloomers, plain shirt-waists and sailor hats; but every woman had a doll. Daisy and I nearly lost our minds over it. Instead of shaking hands with their friends,

they would offer the doll's hand. When they ate or drank, they pretended to feed the dolls as children do. One woman had a stuffed dog. The women danced together, or with their dolls. It was the funniest thing I ever saw. Surely *this* was not a sight one would expect to see after two o'clock in the morning. One can see everything we saw any day, in any nursery, where there are little girls and dolls. There was *one* exception; at a table next to ours a party of six were having supper. One very pretty girl was busily eating and talking to everyone, while a man who sat next her kept kissing her cheek. He just went on kissing, kissing, kissing, and she paid not the slightest attention to him, any more than one might to a breeze that is blowing one's hair about. When she moved her head, his followed, while she was apparently unconscious of him.

Then we went to Maxim's. It was just like the *Café de Paris* or Paillard's after the play. A long line all around the room of enameled white faces, with crimson lips, all hard, but many beautiful, with wonderful clothes, and hands glittering to the knuckles with jewels. There was one woman sitting quietly at a corner table with two men—one evidently an American. She was not painted, or made up in any way, and had on a very pretty white dress and hat; she was neither beautiful nor very young, and yet she looked charming. Her head was small and well set on her shoulders; her nose and mouth were small and refined. We decided she was surely a lady, and was seeing the "sights," just as we were. All of a sudden I had a shock! I could not believe my eyes! She was leaning with elbows on the table, her chin in her hands, her eyes were half closed, but they were staring like a cat's, without blinking, into those of the American opposite her; and then, perfectly oblivious of every one else, she kissed him long and lingeringly! You can't always go by appearances, can you?

When we left, the early morning light was beginning to show. "Where next?" we asked. "More cafés?" "No!" "Do

you want to see everything?" asked Von Weissen.

"Of course we do," said Daisy. George yawned, and Tyrniz and Von Weissen consulted. The latter was insisting on something, the former objecting. Finally I heard "But they want to see all there is."

"Nonsense!" Tyrniz answered. "They don't know what they say. They are but little children—these Americans!"

"I think I will go home, please," I said. And we went.

I must say, from my point of view this morning, I think the grinding mechanical gayety of these tarnished tinsel puppets is more pathetic than thrilling. I wanted to go, and I am glad I went; but the alluring thing about last night was the delight in our own deviltry—at getting so far away from conventionality.

I have opened the windows wide to let in the fresh air. I am glad I can live my own life in the sunshine, instead of the electric glare, and that I can bathe in clear water, instead of powder and perfume extract.

I am going for a ride in the *Bois* with Tyrniz; so good-by, dearest.

Always devotedly, GRACE.

CHAPTER V.

THE VENDOME, PARIS,
July 1st.

DEAREST LOUISE: I was just going to answer your last letter, before getting dressed yesterday morning, when Kate came in with such a "here's-a-present-for-you" expression that I said expectantly: "Well, what is it?"

I took the card with some curiosity. Lord Kirth! Here in Paris! At this hour!

I was so excited I could hardly get into my clothes. In the most unaccountable way my heart suddenly began to dance a mazourka. My fingers shook so that I dropped nearly everything, and I put on half of my clothes wrong side out. Every button stubbornly refused to go into the right buttonhole. Did

you ever try to do anything in a hurry, take twice as long, and have it all go wrong?

At last I had been gathered together in a morning gown, and I gave him a very cold, shaky hand in welcome. I don't know what I was so agitated about. Surely he is a most calming and natural person. I suppose it was scrambling into my clothes in such a hurry that upset me. But it *was* good to see him, and I never thought he could be in such a holiday mood.

"Pon my word, this is a *nice* hour to come and see you; but you understand, don't you?" he asked, wistfully. "I might miss you if I came later, and I am only in Paris for to-day."

"You are welcome always," I laughed, "if you will *only* give me time to get dressed. But, tell me, what are you doing in Paris? And where is Paddy?"

"Oh, he sent you no end of messages when I came away yesterday, as he struggled to get out of the groom's arms and come with me. He is not used to being left behind."

I can't imagine why, but I thought he looked a little embarrassed. Anyway, he said, very hurriedly and indistinctly, his voice only brushing over the top of the words: "I came over about—er—er—some things last night, and I go back to-night." And then he added, enthusiastically: "Can't you let me have to-day? I *must* hear how you find your independence so far. Do come out to Fontainebleau, won't you?"

I wanted to go very much, but Daisy was having a couple of women to lunch and play bridge, and I wondered whom she could get in my place. "Ah! please do," he continued, persuasively; "we can lunch and walk in the forest and dine——"

"Oh, but I can't dine. I have promised the Peabodys over a week."

"Which means that you are going with me this morning, at any rate," and the ripple in his eyes was quite irresistible.

At this moment Daisy came in.

"You can get some one in my place for lunch, can't you?" I said. "I want to go to the country this morning."

"To the country!" she exclaimed, with apparent amazement. "From your career of the past week, this sudden longing for the peace and quiet of cabbage and turnip patches is the last thing I should expect of you. If you are in a terrible hurry," she teased, "I will help you into your pinafore and sunbonnet."

She came in my room while I got ready. As soon as we were alone, she pounced on me.

"Oh, you fox, you!" she exclaimed, as she took my face between her hands and looked into my eyes; "why didn't you tell me that you knew Lord Kirth? Here I find you and him cozily *tête-à-tête* at breakfast time, and you have never mentioned his name." Daisy was so excited, her eyes positively snapped in her head, and she fairly exploded with questions. "How long have you known him? Where did you meet him? Why have you been such a clam about him?" She rattled on without taking time to breathe, let alone give me time to answer. "Oh, Grace! *It would be too nice!* You lucky one!"

"Good heavens, Daisy!" I exclaimed, when I finally got a chance to speak. "What *are* you talking about? Have you lost your mind? Lord Kirth hardly knows I live." So then I told her where, and how, I had met him, and all about it; and she looked so disappointed I could not help laughing aloud.

"It would be so nice!" she said, with a sigh that seemed to come from her shoes.

"It *would* be so nice," I admitted, "too nice to be true—if, I were different."

"Good-by, dear; you are good to let me off luncheon," I said, when we were again in the *salon*. I kissed Daisy good-by on leaving; and, as I did so, was conscious of wondering if Lord Kirth would have liked to be in Daisy's place. The next minute I was ashamed of the thought.

Louise, I think we are most of us daughters of Eve. I wonder if there are many of us who, at some time or other, have not delighted in playing dog-in-the-manger, and tempting man (perhaps only half-consciously) by bestow-

ing favors upon others before him, who may not obtain the same.

If I were to turn Catholic, do you suppose I would tell the father confessor all that I tell you?

Anyway, to-day was perfect. Never in my life have I had a nicer, and certainly very few have been as nice. We went by train and spent all the morning in the palace. Instead of stalking through the rooms like tourists, we hired a special guide (not to guide us) and went to our favorite places, and stayed a long time in each of those. We played a foolish game—almost too foolish to tell; you would certainly have called us idiots had you been there. We made believe the palace belonged to us, and then we planned how we would live in it, and how we would move the furniture about, and which rooms we would choose. I took the apartments of Marie Antoinette, while he took those of Napoleon. We could not decide, though, what to do with the throne. So we went out in the garden, and fed the carp, and asked them what *they* thought. We snapped kodaks (tiny ones) at everything. We saw some soldiers, and took about a dozen pictures of them because they reminded him of his service in India. Nonsense! What likeness could there be between a British regiment and these baggy red-legs? But it was all nonsense, anyway. This does not sound a bit like Lord Bobbie, does it? I have never seen anyone who could so perfectly follow another's mood. I suppose it is the perfection of sympathy. He seems to understand everything I think, and always meets me halfway.

Once in a while I have the impression that he is laughing at me, and sometimes there is an expression in his face that suggests pity, and I feel furious until I realize that he can't pity me, as there is no reason why he should; and yet—I never have the feeling that he misunderstands me. I never have to try to make him see my side of a question, because he sees it quite as well as I do. It is not that he thinks as I do, but that he understands perfectly how it is that I think as I do. Isn't it curious, Louise? I could tell him anything.

After luncheon we walked in the forest. It was poetry in Arcadie. He picked one of those big, purple star flowers for me to pin on my muslin dress; then he looked at me critically, and nodded approvingly. He laughed quietly; but I felt that it was at himself he laughed this time, not at me.

We sat on a big moss-covered rock in a most charming bit of the forest, and wrote foolish messages to our families on picture postal cards. I was conscious that he looked at me continually and critically in that same baffling, half-laughing way. I could not tell whether he was admiring me extravagantly and making fun of himself for doing so, or if he was laughing because he thought *I thought* he was admiring me.

I sat perfectly still, and tried not to feel conscious of the analysis under which I was evidently being put. I waited some time for him to speak; but finally I could not stand the scrutiny any longer, and exclaimed, involuntarily:

"Well?"

He never for a moment turned his gaze from me, but half shut his eyes deliberately and contemplatively, as an artist does when measuring.

"The color of that flower against your dress is wonderful. I wish I could paint you just as you are, against that green background."

"I will send you the dress when I go home," I answered, naively, "and you can take any green plant for your background!"

Finally he said, seriously: "Aren't you going to tell me what you have been doing? Is it just as much fun as you thought it would be? Are you perfectly happy?"

"Beaming!" I laughed. "Oh, the joy of knowing that I can stay out or go home, just when I please! I could stay out until morning if I wanted to, so somehow I don't want to; but I love to know that I can."

"You don't mind if I smoke, do you?" he asked, and settled himself so deliberately that he might have been a Pagan god-image in a cloud of incense.

"Now, tell me from the beginning.

Once upon a time you left a great German ship, and disembarked upon French soil—or, by the way, were you able to disembark after that wonderful captain's dinner? The last time I saw you, you were looking rather anxiously, I thought, at the march of the waiters."

"Well, weren't you a little anxious about the ice cream? After sitting for hours, until I was nearly bent in two over those hashes and stews and sweet pickles, then to have to wait while my waiter decked himself out in tissue paper and paraded the fast-melting ice cream I was longing for, *was* trying!"

"Poor little American baby! Of course she wanted ice cream. Did she get it?"

"No," I answered; "it turned into soup."

"While the band played national airs."

"Just so!" I said. "For once we defeated the Wagnerian service system." And then we both laughed, as though this brilliant conversation was the funniest thing in the world.

"But, to go on, tell me what you have been doing," he begged. So I told him everything I could think of.

He looked rather anxious over Avenue Monceau, even though he smiled at the part Tournay played. He could not understand how I ever got in such a place. (I must say I can't, either.) Finally I told him all about the night we went around Paris—even about the woman who made cat's eyes.

He just sat and listened until I had finished, and then he said, with seriousness:

"I suppose, now, you never will want to endure the dullness of a quiet home table again. Restaurants are so much gayer. It would be a fairy existence, don't you think," and his eyes twinkled, "to spend every evening of your life from now on at Maxim's or the *Café de Paris*, brilliant lights, jeweled women, music, perfume, nectar and ambrosia to eat and drink——" He dodged in time! My parasol just missed his head.

Coming home we had an adventure with a drunken cabman. I had no idea

by which train I would come, so did not order my own carriage to meet me. It was after seven when we reached Paris; and, as I was dining at eight, we took the first fiacre standing there, without paying particular attention. We started with a jerk, while the driver cracked his whip until the horse broke into a canter over the rattling pavement.

"Don't do that, *cocher!*" Lord Bobbie called to him. The driver turned airily on the box.

"Have no fear," he said, in the jauntiest tone, and cracked his whip more than ever, while we caromed from one curbstone to the other.

"Pay attention to what you are doing, imbecile!" screamed Lord Kirth, as we just missed being run down by a tram car, and our wheels banged into those of another cab hard enough to set off the explosives of wrath of the other driver. But we kept on our mad career, while the abusive language of cabby number two grew faint in the distance.

"Don't be afraid!" half sang our gay *cocher*. "Is it not I, François himself, who conducts you? The best cab-driver in all Paris! Don't be afraid!" His hat was over one ear; in one hand he waved the reins, and with the other he cracked the whip, while the frightened horse went at a full gallop.

He looked so rakish, and he was in such a thoroughly hilarious humor, I could not help being amused as well as terrified. We ordered and implored him to stop, but nothing had any effect until the horse dashed up on the sidewalk and the fiacre upset and spilled us out.

As a child I was taught that if you are falling or thrown, you should let yourself go limp, so I fell like a loose bundle. For a moment I did not even move to get up; suddenly I felt Lord Bobby's arm thrust under my head, and his voice rang out in absolute terror: "Grace! Grace, are you hurt?"

I was up in an instant, and, as we were neither of us even scratched, we could not help laughing.

François, the expert, righted his cab, climbed on the box, and, without asking for any pay, careened down the street and smashed to pieces against one of

the omnibuses we had been fortunate enough to escape.

The last we saw of him he was walking gayly down the street, arm-in-arm with a *sergent de Ville*. We hailed another fiacre with more attention this time, and drove home. Lord Kirth left me at the hotel door. "Good-by, Mrs. Trevis," he said, warmly. "I wish you would write to me—my own place or the Marlborough Club will always find me. Good-by!" He smiled and was gone.

He is back in England by now; I wish he would stay in Paris. I can hardly realize he was here only one day—I miss him! Lord Bobby's calling me by my first name rings in my ear like a repeating phonograph; I can't get it out of my mind. It is perfectly stupid! What could be more natural? He has heard me called "Grace" much more often than "Mrs. Trevis," and, in a moment of excitement, the shortest name would naturally be the one he would think of. And yet—the agony in his voice! But that is natural, too; one would be horrified at having anyone, no matter whom, killed before one's eyes. Louise, dear, your best friend is an idiot!

I have, at last, some definite plans. I thought of having Serge come here now; but I am in no particular hurry to see him, or put on top speed to run down Mrs. Grundy. Besides, anticipation is adorable; I am saving up my meeting with Serge, just as I always save the plums in the pudding, for last.

On Saturday I am going to stop with Jeanne de la Tour. It will be a big house party, she writes. I am quite excited at the thought of it, as I have never seen anything of the gay side of French life. My visits when I was here as a schoolgirl were awfully nice, but hardly thrilling; and Jimmy would never go anywhere.

Raoul de Ponthievry is going, and will drive me there in his motor car; which is certainly nicer than going by train—unless we scratch each other's eyes out, as he and I used to do when we were children.

As always, devotedly, GRACE.

CHAPTER VI.

CHATEAU DE LA TOUR, NORMANDIE,

SUNDAY, July 5th, 12.30 A. M.

Louise, dear, I *wish* you could see this place. Old as the hills, and yet absolutely modern so far as comfort is concerned. The wonderful old castle, with its ivy-covered towers! The terraces, with their marble balustrades overlooking a beautiful, formal garden, and avenues bordered with stiff poplar trees like rows of stationed sentinels! Narrow bypaths lead into a dense forest shade of leaves that look almost black.

Indoors it is just as beautiful. Splendid rooms, with carved woodwork and decorations, and filled with beautiful furniture, tapestries, ivories and enamels. And the whole color scheme is perfect. It is the handsomest and best-appointed house down to the most minute details of any I have ever seen, and at the same time the most homelike. Louis le Grand might have selected almost any of the rooms for his apartments of state; and yet one could sit in muddy riding things after the shooting, or throw one's self full length on one of the lounges and eat apples, and it would not be inappropriate.

The drive here from Paris was awfully nice. Raoul and I lunched at a little farm on the way, as we passed no hotels. A very clean little place, with a pretty garden surrounded by a brick wall, against which the peach trees were trained like mashed spiders. The proprietress declared she could give us nothing, but finally agreed to kill a chicken and cut some salad. We ate under a grape arbor, and it was all most attractive.

Raoul is very amusing, and does not either want to marry my money or make love to me. We laughed over the times when we used to play and fight in great-aunt's garden as children. He was such a well-behaved little French boy, but he says I was a horrid little savage, with very long, thin legs, very short full skirts, and a tousled head of reddish hair always blowing about my face. I must have looked like an inverted mop.

No—he says I was rather pretty, even then. My ambition was to act, like Sarah Bernhardt, grand tragedies. Especially killing parts. And I, always chose Raoul to play the part of the one who was killed. As he did not like this, we invariably fought, and I very nearly became Theodora or La Tosca in earnest.

But we buried the hatchet long ago, and arrived thoroughly pleased with our trip and day—at least, I was.

We got here about seven o'clock, and there was not a sign of anyone, excepting a couple of footmen, one of whom told me that Mme. la Comtesse was in her own apartments, and begged that I would go to her there.

The big stone staircase, long corridor and gallery were perfectly deserted. It did not look like a very gay house party. I found Jeanne half sitting, half lying, under a heap of King Charles spaniels on a *chaise-longue*. I don't see how anyone can imagine one is resting on a disjointed thing that is always parting company under one.

She was very sweet, as she always is, and paid me a whole volume of compliments in her own charming *Comédie Française* style. She made me feel that I was not only the most beautiful, but the cleverest, brightest, sweetest angel-lamb that ever was or ever will be—whereas it was all *her* charm and *her* tact! No wonder people love her; she always makes them love themselves. There is an indescribable atmosphere about her. Everyone feels her sympathy. She is like one of the luminous, perfect, gray pearls of the string that is always about her neck, and her clear brilliancy is also like the great diamond drop that hangs from the pearls. Her face is sad until she smiles, but her smile is radiant.

She is very slight, actually thin, and appears much taller than she really is. Her small head is weighted down with a mass of hair as black and smooth as jet. Her face is oval, and her skin perfectly colorless, but clear as wax. Even her lips are quite pale; but her eyes! Dark, deep wells, half hidden under her heavy, black lashes. I have never seen

her in any color but white, and always soft, clinging things, in which any but a French woman would look a frump.

I don't know whether she is beautiful or not. She is so much more than that.

When I went to dress for dinner, I found a pink gown laid out for me.

"But I told you, Kate, that I would wear green."

"Green, indeed!" she answered, "and you so tired that you look pale as a ghost! Not at all! I am going to put you in pink, which will give you some color." (Didn't I tell you that Kate thinks she is still my nurse?) So I found myself in pink when I went to join the other guests.

The big tapestried room, lighted with great candelabra standards, and the women's bright dresses, made a picture that held me immovable upon the threshold for several seconds.

Count de la Tour came forward with much ceremony and great cordiality, and presented me to the people I did not already know.

The Villon bride and groom are here, much to my delight, as they interest me immensely; also De Rachette (which means, I suppose, that most of the men will sit up all night playing cards). The Duc and Duchesse de Chateauroux; she is very pretty, like a doll, and quite as expressionless. She reminds me of an Easter egg—beautifully decorated without and empty within. Her husband is old enough to be her father, but well preserved. (I hate that word, but that is what he is—hermetically incased in bloom of youth cosmetics.) He was evidently a "beau" in his youth, and still keeps up the illusion.

Monsieur and Madame de Nievres; she was Georgette de Broque. We are "Georgette" and "Grace" to one another, and that is all. I can't bear her, and I am sure she can't bear me. If I had never known her, perhaps I'd like her; but I have too vivid a memory of her claws. She was as amiable to-night as a pussy, and with the cat-that-licked-the-cream expression. I would not trust her as far as the corner, let alone around it. She never looks anyone in the eyes.

She has a little lapdog that she even takes to the table with her. Stupid little animal! After Paddy, this one seems half-witted.

Muriel Hartly is here, too; and, as usual, Major Hartly is nowhere about. This time he is fishing in Ireland. She is an attractive woman, but also hard as nails, and in place of a heart carries a perfectly balanced account book. At the same time, she is very likeable, because she does not pretend to be anything except just what she is. She has the best time of anyone I know; she is full of vim and life, and is always good company and ready to do her part. If she likes you, no one can be more interesting; if she doesn't, she is perfectly unconscious of the fact of your even being alive.

Her tame cat, Percy Grafton, is here, of course. He is extremely good-looking, dull, devoted, reliable and British.

I have always wanted to meet Count Sibvorsva, because he is Serge Orlofsky's best friend. I am very much surprised to find him in every way different from what I expected. He is as unlike Serge as anything you can imagine. He seems so young, frank and ingenuous. He is of slight build, straight as an arrow, but graceful in all his movements, with the suppleness that means strength. He has a small head, with black hair brushed so smoothly that it seems to diminish its size, and beautiful hands with long, tapering fingers. He shows his military training by the unconscious way he stands at "attention" and clicks his heels together when he bows or talks to a woman. We had heard so much about each other from Serge that we at once found ourselves talking as though we were old friends, and I feel that I know him very well already.

There is also a Mme. Beauvergne and a Baron Casteau. And they complete the list. She is an artificial-looking blonde, who fluffs herself out above and ties herself in below, until she looks like an animated letter "S," or an advertisement for stays.

Baron Casteau is a very strange looking man, more like an Arab than a

Frenchman. He has a skin like a mulatto and a kinky black beard, very thin and running into bald spots; but his features are sharp. He is (or, at least, was) a Jew; and, of course, has millions. He seems a very quiet and unpretentious little man.

After dinner to-night we all played "bridge"; you see it has even reached here. De Rachette got the Duc to bet extras with him on every hand; he was out several hundreds, but he will probably win it back at piquet. Will follow this introduction with another letter soon. Much love always. GRACE.

CHAPTER VII.

CHATEAU DE LA TOUR, NORMANDIE,
WEDNESDAY MORNING, July 8th.

DEAREST LOUISE: I am writing on my lap, while Kate does my hair. As it is almost impossible to get any time, I am going to try to do my writing as I do embroidery—pick it up and do a little at any odd moment.

I go to bed so late that I never wake until after eleven; miss my early coffee entirely, and get down just in time for the twelve o'clock *déjeuner*. We all go our own ways after this, but generally meet again at five or half-past for "Gouter." Then meet again at eight for dinner; and sit up till morning playing "bridge" or "roulette."

To spend four or five days with people, seeing them constantly, is very apt to sift them out—if not thoroughly, at least so that most of the dust is at the bottom and the biggest lumps are on the top. (Of course, I am pigeon-holing everybody, as usual.) And *whom* do you think I like best among the women? Marie Villon! "Mu'ree," she pronounces it; but under her Rs and slang she is a very good sort. Lord Kirth was perfectly right. She *is* genuine, and she is *nice*.

A few nights ago I had some notes to write and odds and ends to do, so that it was very late when I finally got to bed. I was just about to turn the light out, when there was a knock at my door, and the Chicago whirlwind swept in.

"I saw the light under your door," she gushed, "so I thought I would visit with you a little. I am waiting for Armong; he is still playing cards, I guess."

I felt rather cross. I was tired and wanted to go to sleep, and my manner was neither gracious nor cordial. I thought she was very thin-skinned (if I thought at all), but I was perfectly astonished when she suddenly flushed up with the look of a startled wild animal, and almost stammered: "I did not mean to disturb you, Mrs. Trevis; only I wanted awfully to talk to—to—some one from home. I am sorry; good-night."

She went swiftly towards the door before I realized what I had done. I jumped out of bed and went after her. "Do come back and talk to me; I would love to have you," I exclaimed, by this time thoroughly ashamed of my rudeness, and anxious to make amends. She seemed reluctant, but was finally persuaded to come back and tuck herself up on the foot of my bed. She had on a pink wrapper—a soft, plain thing—and her hair was hanging and tied loosely below the nape of her neck. It was the first time I had ever seen her face without its hideous roll bolster overhang and bun-like coil, pinned where her forehead ought to be. Involuntarily I said aloud: "It is too bad you cannot go downstairs just as you are—you look charming."

She flushed up with pleasure this time. "Isn't it funny, that's just what Armong says. He likes me best this way. It's hard luck to look better when I am not fixed up than when I am," she pouted.

"But why don't you follow out the idea when you are dressed?" I asked. "Your hair is becoming to you off your face and low in your neck—then wear it that way. Your simple wrappers are becoming—wear simple clothes." She had such an apparent good faith in my suggestions that I soon found myself taking a genuine interest in her. Since then Kate has done her hair, and she has put herself and her wardrobe entirely in my hands. She always asks

me what she shall put on, and comes to me for inspection when she is dressed. I have pulled off enough trimmings from her gowns to set up a small fancy store. Everyone has noticed her growing attractiveness; and I am quite proud, as I feel that the improvement is due to me.

I am more interested in watching her than in anything else, and I can actually see her change from day day to day. She has the chameleon faculty that belongs, I think, only to us American women of adapting herself to her surroundings. It may be observation and the gift of mimicry; but, whatever it is, my Chicago vicomtesse has polished off a good many rough corners without spoiling any of her native breeziness. The men are all crazy about her, her originality and *verve*. They never know what she will do or say next. Neither do I. Nevertheless, when I hear her talk, I make a firm resolution that I will give up slang forever, study Henry James, and take a serious course of rhetoric.

However, this seems to be the most delightful place for Americans. Certainly I have never been so much appreciated in my life; and when Muriel Hartly wants to call me "Grace," then I know I am just the "one true and only pebble on the beach." (Did I say I would stop slang?) It is a very delightful sensation, and throws a beautiful rose-colored light over everyone and everything. Is there anything that is half so nice as feeling that people like us? That they are glad to see us come in a room, and sorry to see us go out?

And now! I am so excited I don't know what to do; but I suppose it will all die out when I have seen—things we look forward to are invariably flat, and it is the unexpected that is really delicious.

Yesterday afternoon at tea, Jeanne announced that Prince Ulrich of Schönberg-Grussdow would arrive to-day. He is the one man in Europe about whom I have always had a great curiosity. Everyone knows him, everyone talks about him, everyone agrees about his great good looks, and disagrees about his

attractiveness. Some say he is the most fascinating, charming man in the world, and others that he is an ill-tempered, cross-grained egotist. Also his being a woman-hater, with an insane wife, certainly has a romantic flavor, so that I have a keen desire to see for myself. The announcement was received with interest by everyone; and as for me, I actually grinned like a Cheshire cat.

Georgette was sitting near me; and, as she had been in bad humor all day, took this chance to vent it on me. "I don't know what *you* are grinning about," she said, disagreeably, "as he certainly won't look at *you*! Your head is becoming a little heavy for your shoulders, I think, *ma chère amie*" (this in the most patronizing tone), "because you find yourself in the rôle of a little queen to these Sibvorsva and Ponthievy children. Prince Ulrich is too used to the conquest of women to interest himself in anyone, and he is certainly too big a feather for your mad cap."

"Please, ma'am, mayn't I even stand by the roadside and *look* at him?" I said it in my meekest baby-voice, but I was boiling underneath. Up to this moment I was only interested and curious, impersonally, as I would be interested in a much-discussed play; but as soon as Georgette told me I could not make him notice me my whole energy was instantly up in arms. Of course, what she says is probably true, and he will not even so much as look at me; but that is just the reason why I am all the more determined to do my very utmost to have him take an interest. He *shall* take an interest (if I can possibly make him) and Georgette shall see it, too!

This whole thing is childish, Louise, dear; I know it. When I was a little girl I jumped out of a window and broke my ankle, because I was told I didn't dare. I know I am an idiot, but I still can't take a dare, even if I tall.

So now I begin my window jump to-day. He is here *now*, and *déjeuner* is ready. I think I shall be a little late. I wonder if he likes to be punctual at his meals. He will have to know *who* is keeping him waiting for this one. Comte

de la Tour is too punctilious to go in without me. A cold luncheon on my account may not impress him favorably; but if I can even get him to dislike me, it will be a tremendous gain over being unnoticed.

We are going to a picnic (if I ever let them get through luncheon), so I have on a short white embroidered linen dress, simple but perfect in fit, and a dream of a hat with strings tied under my chin. I look so pretty-sweet in it, if he takes me at my "face" value he'll think I could *never* keep anyone waiting on purpose. But if he takes me on a footing-up basis, my white ties are very tidy, and the two-inch dado of stocking under my short skirt as perfect as thinness and embroidery can make it. You know, Louise, my feet and ankles are pretty, even at home; and French women's look like those of the college boys dressed in girls' clothes. Head or foot, M. le Prince? Which will be your Waterloo?

ONE A. M., THURSDAY.

It is high time I was asleep, but I must tell you how the first day of the encounter went.

As I expected, the count insisted on waiting for me, and every one was in the great hall. As I walked along the gallery, I saw my intended victim standing on the far side, next to the mantel, talking to my host. I went slowly down the staircase; and, as I was looking him over, he looked up at me squarely in the eyes. I looked him as squarely back for a moment, and then, although I turned my attention to the count instead, I was perfectly conscious that the prince's gaze followed me. I was not even surprised, when I reached the foot of the stairs, to find him standing by the newel-post. He walked across in front of the count, and, turning as though he knew some one must be there, said, more as an order than a polite remark: "Present me."

The count said: "Mrs. Trevis, Prince Schönberg-Grussdow."

What it was, I don't know. Did he feel it? I don't know; but to me it

seemed for a moment as though an electric current had been turned on. I had the distinct consciousness of affinity. I almost felt that I had known him before.

Ah, Louise! I do see the fascination they talk about. He is the most beautiful person I have ever seen. (Beautiful is the only adjective that will express it.) He looks like an Apollo and Antinous in one. But it is the kind of beauty that makes me feel afraid. I don't know what I am afraid of—just a fluttering of my moth nature—just a consciousness that here is a flame! I have talked much of moths and candles, but I don't like the simile. The moth is so powerless to hurt the flame, and the flame can so easily destroy the moth forever. And yet—it is too much fun, and I am being drawn—how near?

If he were not such a thoroughbred, he would be bold and impertinent. He *does* stare. Stare so that he draws his eyebrows slightly together; his teeth gleam, actually glisten, when he smiles; and he smiles nearly all the time. He talks well, and a great deal, but always off the top. It is impossible to discover what he really thinks. He may be able to love—I know he is able to hate. Maybe he could be tender—I am sure he could be cruel.

Luncheon is an informal meal, and we sit "any place." The prince took the chair next to mine. How *can* he be a woman-hater?

"You fascinate all women, do you?" I thought. "And you think you will reduce me to a little bunch of foolishness, do you? Well, you won't—not if I can help it!" And the more attentive he became, and the more he evidently tried to be attractive, the more I determined not to be attracted.

So that this whole day's campaign, instead of being an assault upon the enemy, has been a case of defense of the enemy's attack.

Of course, we rattled on at luncheon. I was interested and "keyed up" and he—he is not unconscious of me, anyway! He asked me to drive to the picnic. I was most politely sorry, but I had already promised Count Sibvorsva. Wouldn't I at least come back with him?

I couldn't do that, either; I was coming back with Comte de la Tour.

Soon everyone was leaving. Baron Casteau drove a four-in-hand with Georgette, the vicomtesse and some of the men. Jeanne went in her victoria with Raoul, and the rest all paired off, except the left-over man who went on the coach.

Sibvorsva and I started among the first in a pony cart, and M. le Prince stood in the midst of the traps and tea baskets on the driveway. As we went down the avenue he was still standing, screwing his mustache up on his cheek bones.

We drove through such pretty country. Every hundred yards brought us before a picture well worth putting on canvas. We let the pony go his own gait and enjoyed the drive and each other; at least we had been enjoying each other, until Sibvorsva got in his dejected mood.

"I know I have no chance," he said, with a sigh; "you refuse me every day, but I always thought you would marry Serge, and I love him as only a younger officer can love his senior, when he *does* love him. So every time you say 'no,' I say to myself that it is quite right of you to refuse a sheephead like me, to be Princess Orlofskv. But here you are flirting outrageously with Schönberg-Grussdow." The dejection was gone, and a temper was threatening.

I laughed as I answered: "But I can't marry Serge; how can I? Even suppose he loves me and wants me, of which I am not at all sure, what would we live on? His wonderful estates require heaps and heaps of money to keep up, and he would lose a large portion of his income by marrying a woman not 'noble.' You know how many properties are entailed like that. I have a very good income, plenty for me to do almost anything I like, except buy an English duke or a Prince Orlofsky. Besides Serge hates marriage; he has a younger brother who will inherit, so he does not have to think of the inevitable heirs." This brought us around to the first subject again.

"Then you had better marry me. You would be a countess!" he said, wistfully,

as one offering a last inducement. This time I burst out laughing. "Don't you want to be a countess? We are a very old family." His voice was becoming positively pathetic.

"No, angel-child, I am not crazy to be a countess," I said, rather caressingly. "You see, I would so much rather be—well, a grand duchess. Oh, I am not even sure but that over here, where you all have handles to your names, 'Mrs.' does not sound rather distinguished and out of the ordinary." I talked perfect nonsense the whole drive out. Sibvorsva is nice; in fact, he is perfectly sweet. If anyone wanted to be a countess, it is a most favorable opportunity.

The picnic spot selected was a perfect fairy-tale place—woods, moss, rocks, a rushing brook, and one of those wash-board beaches, where the peasants still pound their clothes into rags and cleanliness on the stones. It was a lovely party. Everyone came; all but the duchess and De Rachette.

A footman had been sent ahead, and the tea things were all set out. Pastries, jam rolls, tarts, and every kind of drink that can be made out of water and syrups. Jeanne was a veritable delight to all five senses. She gave us tea and sweet cakes, and we sat around on rocks and grass and moss in truly rural simplicity. I was next to Jeanne, Raoul on the other side of her, and Sibvorsva on the other side of me. All the rest were grouped about, but we were a little apart. I was getting a cramp in my foot from sitting on it, so I turned around and stuck my feet straight out in front of me. I looked up and found Prince Ulrich staring at them; so I turned my toes; pigeon-toed and out again. Did he think I'd cover them up? Not I!

"They are charming, Mrs. Trevis," said he.

"Yes, aren't they?" said I.

"You seem to be awfully pleased with yourself," he said, as he sat down.

"I have no reason not to be yet!" I could have pinched myself for saying the "yet," but I followed it up with "you see old age and ugliness are some distance off."

"Which means that you are perfectly satisfied with two qualities, youth and beauty?"

"If you thought that, you would not have made that remark," I answered.

"Yet beautiful women are proverbially stupid." His eyebrows came together, and his teeth showed.

"That is, I imagine, because no one expects anything of beauty *but* beauty," I retorted. "No one ever talks to a beauty of anything except her own looks, and so she thinks and takes care of, and lives on nothing but her own face and figure."

"And you, dear, are the exception that proves it," said Jeanne. In turning toward her, I caught Raoul's look. He was gazing at her with such unmistakable admiration that I almost felt like begging his pardon—as one would if stumbling into the wrong room. He saw me look at him, and he put on an expression that he used to have as a child, when great-aunt sent word she wanted to speak with him. But there was no teasing in my smile, and the hatchet remained buried.

"Talk of talented beauty," he said to Jeanne, "have you ever seen Grace act? Let's vote now that she amuse us!" And before I could stop him, he presented to the "distinguished company assembled the world famous tragedienne, Mme. Trevis!" "Would some one in the audience," he babbled, "volunteer to die? Anyone would do!" He, personally, would not die any more! Of course, this amusement met with bravos, etc., and the grown-up French imp grinned out, "Now I am paid back for all the times I had to be corpse."

This was a nice fix in which he had put me. Everyone looked expectant, and Raoul was just hugging himself over his silly tricks. Was he daring me? This was my "dare day," it seemed.

I got up to do my part, and his grin would have paid me, if I had gone no further. I gave some of my old imitations, Sarah Bernhardt, Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Carter, etc. Jeanne looked at me as a mother does when her lamb is showing off a new gambol; much

pride, most indulgence, and some anxiety.

Georgette's smile looked as though she had been sucking lemons, but on account of the unanimous applause she said, complacently:

"She is really quite clever."

Muriel was very appreciative. My vaudeville accomplishments made such a "hit," they would not let me stop. Prince Ulrich and Sibvorsva looked positively hypnotized, and everyone else called for more, until I took to my heels and flew.

Marie Villon was standing near, and I linked my arm in hers as I passed and pulled her with me, almost on a run, down a little path along the brook. When we had gone some distance from the still echoing bravos and were walking along slowly, Marie looked at me with a far-away look for a moment, and then impetuously kissed me.

"Mrs. Trevis, you make me downright homesick. You are a perfect vaudeville crackajack! Honest. You're good enough to go on at Weber & Fields'!"

Her praise was so genuine that I was almost embarrassed by it. An idea occurred to me.

"What do you say," I asked her, "to our getting up a cake walk, just you and I? All Paris is cake-walk mad, and we can get some one to play ragtime on the pianola."

"I think it would be great!" she said, and her eyes fairly sparkled. "But I don't know many of the steps."

I told her that I had taken lessons from Bonnie Maginn all last winter, for fun, and would show her all she needed. She is graceful, I am sure she can dance, so we may surprise the household with our talents.

Just then Count de la Tour came to fetch me to drive home, and Sibvorsva went back with Marie. We got back just in time to dress for dinner. I found a box of gardenias from Prince Schöenberg-Grussdow! He must have wired for them the moment I drove away to the picnic. There was also a box of chocolates from Sibvorsva.

I waited to wear the gardenias until

after dinner, when I could bring down Sibvorsva's chocolates at the same time.

That's not flirting—that's taste!

Good-night, dear.

GRACE

CHAPTER VIII.

CHATEAU DE LA TOUR, NORMANDIE,
July 15th.

DEAREST LOUISE: I can't tell you how glad I was to get your long letter from Hempstead this morning. I wish I could see Dick's horses this year, and I hope Bean-Pole will win the Suburban for him. Tell him I shall follow the race in my imagination from over here, and send best wishes.

Your description of Lucy makes me very anxious. What is the matter with all the women at home? I should be afraid to walk up the street lest some doctor seeing me would decide, from the way I carry my head or turn out my toes, that I had appendicitis and must be operated on at once, and have me carried to the table before I could even call for help!

I had letters from Lotta von Bohlen and Maud Beverly this morning. They both asked me to stop with them whenever, and for as long as, I like. I think I shall go from here to Lotta.

I opened Maud's letter first this morning with a sort of expectancy. She does not mention Lord Bobby. Louise, I really think I am a cormorant, a regular dog in the manger. I am not in love with Bobby or anyone. *If* with anyone it is Serge; sometimes I think I *am* half in love with him. And yet this prince has a tremendous attraction for me. I feel at my best and brightest when he is about. We have great magnetism each for the other; the magnetism of *beauty*, that is all it is. If I were to have chicken pox, for instance, he would run from me; and if he were to knock out a front tooth, I am sure his fascination for me would disappear.

It is rather curious. I can *feel* that he thinks me absolutely beautiful, my face lovely, my figure wonderful—that is, I am *his* type of physical perfection. And perhaps he knows that I think the same

of him. We like to be together because it is then that we both *look* our best. (Louise dearest, what a fool I would feel if anyone but you were ever to read all this conceit. But you know what I mean, we each like the other's type.)

If there is such a thing as transmigration of souls, we once were perhaps a pair of Greek chariot horses. Until one of us were lame or threw a spavin, and then we were mates no longer. I feel sure that when he involuntarily came to meet me, on the day of his arrival, that we were both vaguely conscious of the chariot time.

Serge's love (or friendship) for me is very different, but it, too, runs in one particular groove. I am mentally attractive to him in the same degree that I am physically attractive to Schönberg. When my spirits are high and my mind unclouded, when I am at my worldly best and smartest, then Serge, as I remember him, is the ideal companion. I might have chicken pox and Serge would not change, but if I were to be stupid or peevish, he would go back to Russia by the first train. If I were looking particularly pretty, he might take the *second* train.

It is when I first wake in the morning, before I ring for my coffee, that these pictures of Prince Ulrich and Serge come before my mind. At the end I am always conscious that the images stop, gradually a face grows distinct before me, and I am looking straight down, into the depths of cold, blue eyes. Then over my spirit there comes a wave of unrest, and I abruptly ring for Kate. I wish "Robert, Viscount Kirth," would stop looking into all the corners of my soul—before I have had coffee, too!

I am getting too serious. I came abroad to flutter about, not to put my feelings under a microscope. I am going to stop thinking about Schönberg's good looks, Serge's mind, and Lord Bobby's eyes, and talk to you about something else.

There is no doubt about it, Louise dear, I am becoming spoiled. I think this is the very nicest of all house parties. For weeks the count must have

been planning each hour. I know of no one who *delights* in detail as much as Henri de la Tour, and it is just because all the little things are attended to that everything he attempts is a success.

I think we are all getting apollinarisitis of the brain. We are all so young and foolish now that we play children's games—croquet every afternoon and even puss in the corner.

Yesterday it rained, and we played hide and seek. It is rather an interesting study—this game. I wonder it is not played at all house parties by some people, and by all people at some house parties.

I hid in a closet under the stairs. 'T was inky dark. I suddenly felt a hand creep along my arm, and a voice whispered eagerly, "Is it thou?" Instinctively I moved away, and opened the door. "No! I am not your 'thou,' whoever she may be," I said, laughing over my shoulder as I walked away. I hid behind a piece of tapestry across the hall, but where I could see the door. "Who in the world is M. de Nievres' 'thou'?" I wondered. A moment later Mme. Beauvergne ran into the hiding place.

Muriel Hartley and the duc were the hunters, and I was so badly hidden they found me at once. "Tell me," I said, "are De Nievres and Mme. Beauvergne having an affair?"

"Oh, dear me! Didn't you know that?" Muriel answered, and went on looking for the others. When they were all found but those two, I could not resist going to the stair closet.

"*Venez donc!* It is another turn!" I called into the darkness. Mme. Beauvergne came out, blinking at the light, as bland and serene as a barn-yard duck; but De Nievres looked as though he were turning up his coat to go out into the rain.

It was Prince Ulrich's and my turn to hunt, as we were the first found. The prince is continually in a beaming humor. I have never met anyone who is so easy-going and amiable. He is very amusing, and understands not only English, but American slang as well as

I do; we babble utter nonsense all the time, and I feel as stimulated as though I were living on champagne, nux vomica and coffee. He is not three yards away from me, if he can help it, and as Sibvorsva never is either, I feel like the "lamb between the eagle and the bear." They both send me flowers every day, and I wear them alternately. If I drive with one I walk with the other, and I generally sit between them at meals.

But I must tell you a joke on the duc. You know he is not as young as he was, and he is a little bit hurt about his lack of success (but when a man's eyes begin to look fishy it is time he stopped trying to look fervid). Georgette, I think, owns him, but the baron is richer and the price of clothes goes up every year, so the duc has been something of a bear lately. Bear would be a very good sobriquet for him—a big brown hugging bear, who will dance if any pretty woman will play the organ. At all events he is not a success, and he has been trying to make a conquest of Muriel, or me, or both. The silly thing about him is that he thinks himself perfectly irresistible. Yesterday, Muriel and I compared notes, so just for fun we thought we would chaff him.

We had him between us at dinner. First while he was talking to me, she seemed so interested and anxious to get his attention she even nudged his arm with her fan. He turned toward her like a fisherman who after hours of waiting suddenly gets a bite. Then his surprise and delight having lasted a moment, and when he was beginning a conversation, I began the "A-hem—" and "er—er—" on my side. He turned like a steel spring. We kept this up until his eyes looked as though they had belladonna in them, and he thought Don Juan a baa-lamb compared to himself, and then we let him catch us laughing and signaling to each other. Furious! He was so mad he could have throttled us both. Stupid thing! And yet it is rather pathetic, his taking himself so seriously. I suppose, though, we are all very serious to ourselves. I am sure I for one sit up blandly and swallow all the flattery that comes my way without

so much as blinking. (That is all part of the game. As Serge says: "Never seek to analyse illusions—if they are pleasant ones.")

I have just been having a long talk with "Mur-ree." After coming in from a drive with Schönberg this afternoon I took the chance to lie down on the lounge, and scribble to you in pencil.

Marie and I are getting very intimate, and I am certainly growing fond of her. She threw a cushion on the floor beside me, and sat down on it, Turkish fashion, her elbows on the edge of the lounge, her chin in her hands.

It was very evident that something was on her mind that she wanted to talk about; her face was puzzled, and she was absent-mindedly drumming with her finger-nails on her cheek.

Finally she said: "Look here, Mrs. Trevis, these people stagger me; I can't make the game out." (Marie's language always "strengthens" in proportion to her interest.) "My idea of the tip-top people wasn't this sort of thing at all." She continued like a child struggling to explain an example in mental arithmetic. "Of course, my folks aren't swells like these, but I'll just tell you one thing: 'Mommer' would turn over in her grave if she knew of some of the goings-on I've been seeing for the last few days. We may not be old nobility in Chicago, but a woman loves her husband—or gets a divorce. Here—why where do you draw the line between these women and the *demi-monde*?"

I thought it was a distinction without a difference myself, so I said nothing. Marie hesitated a moment, and then plunged further into the subject.

"You know the duchess asked me if I would lend her a book, so I took it to her when I came up last night. She was in the most wonderful get-up I ever saw. She had on a nightgown entirely of lace under a pleated chiffon overthing; her hair had just been curled, because the lamp was still burning. She was powdering and painting her face as if for a ball—and it was after twelve o'clock, and everyone was going to bed!"

Marie began twisting the lace of her

wrapper through her fingers. "Countess de la Tour is the loveliest thing ever," she said, musingly. "I suppose *she* is straight, although I don't know. She gives Mrs. Hartly and Mr. Grafton rooms next to each other. I like Mrs. Hartly, she is a perfect corker, and that's what bothers me. I don't care about Mme. de Nievres or the duchess. I asked Armond about these things this morning, and he laughed at me and said: 'You are a sweet little *ingénue*, my bride, but it does not concern you. If you don't like it—why, don't notice it!' That is all very well. These people are nothing to me and I don't care a hang what they do, and as I have to live among them I'll get used to it, I guess. But I tell you one thing, if Armond tries any of this 'funny business' himself, I won't stand for it! Not a minute!"

She was so fierce as she said it that I could see Armond's monthly allowance of American greenbacks growing pitifully less, and finally going "out" altogether. It is certainly true: A man who marries for money *earns* it! Every penny!

Nevertheless, Armond could go much further and fare worse. Marie is made of the right sort of material, and she is perfectly right in being shocked at this state of affairs. I am shocked at myself to find that I am not shocked, and more than that, to see with what reckless incautiousness I am surrendering to my surroundings.

I wonder if there are many men who have devoted as much of their lives to the study of women as Prince Ulrich must have done, to have become such a pastmaster in the art of pleasing them! He anticipates my every wish; cushions and footstools are tucked behind my back and put under my feet; just as I think I would like them, and never when I would not. Gardenias from Paris every day, but these are not the attentions I mean, as these things would be done by any man who is interested in a woman. The things he thinks of are amazing! All sorts of insidious ways of appealing to one's senses. Imagine an American man refusing to smoke or

drink champagne on account of the woman he means to talk to after dinner, and taking aromatic liqueurs instead, for the same reason! Perfume, music, pink lights—all these things are more or less demoralizing when they are well done (not crude and coarse like the things in Paris).

Sometimes I feel actually hypnotized by this prince. The fascinating little twist of his Rs, his personality, his subtle devotion—and I wonder if my moth wings are not singeing on the edges.

What do you suppose Lord Bobby would think if he were here? They were all talking about him at luncheon to-day. There was a picture of him in the last number of "Country Life," and an article on the wonderful improvements at Howarth Castle. Everyone sung his praises until I was nearly on the verge of tears. I suddenly began to feel exactly as though I were homesick. Don't you think that was the queerest thing? I never felt like that before; this continual excitement and the late hours must be making me nervous. Lord Bobby is so strong and restful—what a contrast to Schönberg!

Ah, well, it takes many kinds to make a world!

GRACE.

CHAPTER IX.

CHATEAU DE LA TOUR,

July 15.

I am going to write of a surprise this time, Louise dear, and it begins with a minstrel prologue.

"Murree's" and my cake walk was a success! It was not a miserable theatrical misrepresentation, but a genuine plantation performance. She is very tall, taller than I, and thin as a match, so she was Pompey and I was Dinah. She wore a pair of her husband's trousers, a riding shirt of her own, without a stock, and her hair, which is nearly black, was tucked up under a slouch hat.

I borrowed a red and white striped calico dress from one of the maids (it reached somewhere between my knees and my ankles), and turned it in at the neck with a handkerchief of turkey red; my head was tied up in bandanna with

a little fringe of black worsted braids sewed around the edge to hide my light hair. We looked so funny and hideous with our black faces and luscious, over-ripe red lips half an inch wide, that when we were ready we were in such fits of laughter that we could hardly keep the tears from running down and making white streaks through the burnt cork.

First we did a turn of minstrel jokes. No one understood, so I had to repeat them in French, and as you can imagine the snappiness of impromptu translation, we gave those up and did the songs. Marie sings quite well and dances like a dream, so when we got to the dance part, our audience went wild.

Of course I was thinking only of my lines and my part, and did not let myself look at anyone. After we made our last bow and had reached the hall, I suddenly heard a voice say in English:

"Well, Mrs. Dinah! As an artist in charcoal, do you neglect old friends?"

"Lord Kirth!"

I was so amazed to see him I fairly screamed his name, but could not articulate another syllable. I was absolutely dumfounded! The realization of the ridiculous figure I must be cutting in that get-up made me feel such an idiot that I stood awkward and speechless before him for a moment; and then, following my impulse, turned and ran up to my room as fast as my feet could carry me.

"Oh, Kate, Kate! Look at me! Lord Kirth is here and this is the way he saw me!" The tears almost welled over, as though anxious to do their part in washing off the cork.

"Ah, well, darlin', don't worry! I will soon have you yourself again. But with all these goings-on, I am glad if there is anybody whose notions you mind going against!"

"I don't care a rap about anybody's notions! I don't believe I like Lord Kirth at all! It was no end of fun until he came; he spoiled everything!"

By the time Kate got me white and dressed in my own clothes, I had thought it over, and worked myself up

until I positively disliked Lord Kirth. I sailed downstairs with my chin very much up, and a horrid little beast called Resentment tugging at my left side. Before I reached the drawing room Paddy came bounding toward me, and I was so pleased to have him recognize me that I almost forgot my peevishness.

"Paddy, you fraud! You only know your friends by their clothes. You wouldn't speak to me when I was black!" I felt Lord Bobby looking at me quizzically, and instantly the little beast Resentment began to tug harder than ever.

Sibvorsva and Prince Ulrich did not leave me, and Lord Bobby talked to Marie. I felt tired and not much amused, and went to my room very soon.

A few minutes later I received this note:

DEAR MRS. DINAH: On the plantation they are up and out in the fresh air early! Will you walk, ride, drive or sit in the fields with me to-morrow morning? Which and when?—and please!

KIRTH.

I was beginning to feel thoroughly ashamed of myself. He had made me seem foolish in my own estimation, so I had added temper and pettiness to my own shortcomings. He either did not notice them, or else ignored them. I hoped the former and answered gladly:

I think it would be nice to ride at ten.
Thank you. G. T.

So this morning we went—he and I and Paddy. Paddy had a beautiful time tearing around and poking his nose in every hole in the ground, and looking as wise as a sage when he found nothing, and utterly foolish if by chance he scared a bird or a rabbit.

I don't think we tired the horses much, although it was very warm, as we walked most of the way.

"Why did you want to get away from me so quickly last night, Mrs. Dinah? Your performance was very clever. I had no idea you had such histrionic ability."

The suspicion that he was chaffing me instantly brought back Resentment

(clinging to my side), but I shook it off as far as I could, though he is the most persistent and tenacious little beast, and I answered: "It is not a very high order of accomplishment." And then I confessed: "Really I was awfully upset at having you suddenly appear and find me in such a make-up."

"But why should you mind me? Surely you know me better than you do most of the people here?"

"Of course I do—much better—it is not that—I don't know why; maybe it was the suddenness of your coming, but you have no idea how silly I felt!"

Lord Bobby laughed and said, gayly: "Child, child! What a child you are! I wonder if you are ever going to grow up?"

"Grow up? Good heavens! Do you realize that I was married over seven years ago, and that I am twenty-five years old?"

"You are a child all the same. Aren't you going to have enough of this play-time soon?"

A horrid suspicion crossed my mind: "Are you going to preach?" I asked, anxiously.

"Oh, dear no! It would be no use." And then in answer to my frown he added: "Why should I? You are free and untrammelled as the big green lunar moths you think so beautiful. May you fly on just as far and as high as you would like until——"

"Well?"

"Until you don't want to any more."

We quickened our pace and cantered on for some time. Then when we walked again he said, *apropos* of nothing:

"You know I have a profound admiration for American women. You are a wonderful race, really!"

"Have you ever seen such a change as in our Chicago bride?" I asked.

"No more than I expected," he said.

"I liked her from the first moment I met her. I liked the way she shook hands and the way she looked at me. After all, what does it matter how a diamond is set? It is the purity and color of the stone itself that counts; you may set it as you fancy. The viscomtesse is

a very beautiful diamond; with French cutting and polishing she appears to greater advantage, but the stone and the quality are American. Your 'Uncle Sam' has reason to be proud of the material of which his women are made."

"If we are all diamonds, what sort of setting am I in?" I asked, curiously.

"You broke out of your setting and fell in a brook, and you are being washed about from one whirlpool to another. There are a lot of little fishes who would like to swallow you, you look so bright and edible, but I don't think you would agree with them very well. Of course you may be eaten, or lost in a crevice, but I think some day the fairy prince will find you, and put you in a beautiful setting, and keep you very carefully."

"I hope not to be eaten or lost in a crevice before he comes! That is a very pretty fairy-tale. I did not know you could say such pretty things."

"Well, you see after all the eulogies these accomplished continental admirers lay at your feet, I would not like to have you feel that you are wasting a morning in a blank absence of compliments!"

And there appeared in his eyes the ripple that always irritates me, because I know he is laughing at me.

"By the way," I asked, as though I had not noticed his chaffing me, "who are you going to be at the fête on Friday? I think you would be splendid as Petruchio, or you might black up as Othello—no, I would not like you to black up—"

And then I suddenly stopped and I am sure I got crimson, and went on lamely, in a way that had no sense at all. "Black make-ups are horrid!"

Lord Bobby laughed aloud: "You seem to have black make-ups rather on your mind to-day; but what a brutal nature you must think I have, to choose those two characters for me. Why did you?"

"I don't know," I babbled on. "The Moor I thought of, on account of all the dangers that he had endured, and Petruchio—well, because of your eyes, I suppose. If you don't know what I mean, Paddy does, and that is enough."

"My eyes? Won't you tell me what you mean?"

"No."

"Will you ever tell me?"

"Don't think so. But what are you going to be? I have made such bad guesses; tell me."

"I am not going to be anybody, as I shall be at home again, smoking my pipe in the moonlight with Paddy, while you are dancing about as Titania with your court of elves and crickets and grasshoppers!"

"Do you *really* mean you are not going to stay?" I asked in astonishment.

"I really mean that I am going away again to-day. A very dear friend of mine was ill in Paris, and I came over to see him, and then, thinking I would like to find how a certain independent person was carrying on her rebellion, I wired to De la Tour and came here."

"Yes, but now that you *are* here, why don't you stay?"

"I am not usually keen on parties, and I really would stay for this one if I could, but it is important for me to be in England on the seventeenth."

"Oh, I am so sorry! What a shame to miss it. It is going to be the most beautiful party!"

"Would you like to see me dressed up in the garments of some worthy, long since departed, and pirouetting around to the tinkle of the band? Just imagine, too, my having to put my prettiest French forward, and tell each imitation how she outshines the original!"

I laughed out loud, at the picture he drew. "That *would* be an effort for you, wouldn't it? It is too bad that Paddy can't go in your place! He would *love* it, and not miss a detail! He would outdo the ancient dandies in blandishments."

Lord Kirth laughed. "Paddy!" he called, "how did you let Mrs. Trevis see through you so clearly?" And then he said to me:

"I can't imagine what the affinity can be between you and Paddy, but you seem to understand him amazingly. And so I am sure that the same clever mind that can so clearly discern Paddy's mental gyrations, will penetrate other

whirlpools as well. Tell me"—he leaned over and forward in his saddle, and looked at me searchingly—"tell me honestly, you don't really care about this sort of thing, do you? It is all very amusing for a while, but you are not longing for a whole life of it, are you?"

"M-m—" I hesitated; "what do you mean by 'this sort of thing'?"

"Well, to put it brutally, do you like putting yourself up as a target, as it were, for all these pretty feathered arrows to try to pierce? You say you don't want to marry, and yet you have numberless love speeches made to you in as many different languages, every day from noon until midnight."

"Well, I certainly don't seem to have love speeches made to me in English, or before noon!" I laughed.

I don't know what was the matter with me, but it was just as though a little devil within my brain were mixing up all my intentions. I longed to let my better side come forward, and instead of that the worst side stayed exultantly on top. I almost wanted to cry, but the black side was in full possession of me, and I chattered on with the flippancy of a wound-up monkey.

I felt that he was disappointed in me, and the more I felt it the farther away from him I seemed to drift. The thought that he probably knew exactly what was in my mind did not help me in the least. We had all been, it seemed, like a big party of tinsel dolls, and we were emptily dancing about and perfectly happy at our own emptiness, until this real man came and spoiled it all.

In the midst of the jumble of my thoughts, his voice went on lightly:

"It is perfectly natural, all young things like to play. I am afraid it is only that I am growing old; I have had so many serious things to think of, that I have had very little chance of late to tread the primrose path of dalliance, and now I find I don't like it, nor do I care for these people. I don't like the things they do, I don't like the things they think; and this continual striving for excitement tires me, and fails to amuse me."

We had returned to the chateau and

dismounted. There was no one about, and we stood a few minutes in the hall before going to change our riding things for breakfast.

"Listen, dear child," he said, "you don't mind if I call you that, do you? I feel as though I might be Diogenes, and you a Greek damsel at the court of Alexander. I did not want to come here as a wet blanket—I am glad you are amusing yourself, and I am sure your luster is too brilliant to be scratched by the pebbles in the brook. As for the fishes, I have not much fear of their swallowing you. And I want you to remember one thing—will you? Remember that in me you have a devoted friend—and one who believes in you *absolutely!*"

He took my hand firmly in his, and looked at me so seriously that his eyes confounded the little devil in my brain, and the little beast, Resentment, flew to the end of nowhere.

The next moment he smiled brightly, and with a crisp, cheery "Good luck to you, little moth," he turned into the corridor leading to the bachelor wing.

At *déjeuner* he sat between Jeanne and me, and we all talked together. He chatted merrily as though nothing could interest him more than the details of a costume fête, although he firmly and politely declined to stay for it.

He left immediately after breakfast with Count de la Tour, who was going all the way to Paris in the motor car to attend to the last details for the fête.

I kissed Paddy very affectionately behind his ear, and he cocked his little head sideways and gave me a very friendly "wouf," as he trotted away after his master.

I am in a queer mood, as though I were wound up to go, and I can't stop. I feel sort of aimlessly restless. I don't know what I want.

WEDNESDAY.

To-night we are to have the greatly anticipated fancy dress fête. Thirty or more guests have arrived to stop at the house and all the neighboring chateaux have big house parties.

The fountain and grounds are to be illuminated, and part of the terrace has been made into a ballroom. They have laid a wonderful parquet; I don't see how they did it. It is to be surrounded by a high green hedge, and have a dome made of ropes of chestnut leaves lighted by great illuminated pinkish-white lilies.

My pair (Schönberg and Sibvorsva) and I went out to see how it was going to look. We met the charming Georgette coming in from the garden with the baron. Her hair was a little blown—I hadn't noticed the wind—and the baron was beaming. I wonder how much the beam cost him!

Good gracious! Kate says it is after eight o'clock and I have not even the faintest idea how my costume goes! How do you think Queen Louise of Prussia will look, reproduced through the personality of your

GRACE?

CHAPTER X.

CHATEAU DE LA TOUR,
THURSDAY, July 16, —.

Well, Louise dear!

I shan't have to think of Prince Ulrich of Schönberg-Grussdow before my coffee any more. *That's over!* His Mightiness came and saw, although he certainly did not conquer—but neither did I.

He has packed up his doll rags and gone home in a temper. In fact, I would not be surprised if he tore the doll rags to shreds, and stamped on them before he packed. At all events he is furious, and all is over between us!

But I must tell you about it in the order in which it all happened.

To begin with, I *never* saw anything half as beautiful as the fête; it was simply fairy-land. Just imagine the great formal garden spread out under the full moon on a clear warm night, with the fountains playing silver and gold and making the shadows under the trees even blacker by contrast. The terrace, and the fantastic costumes brilliantly lighted by the great pink lilies, were the realization of a dream carnival.

Everyone looked beautiful. Whether

it was the pinkish light, or that everyone hit on a becoming costume, or that I had a pretty-film over my eyes, I don't know, but it was a feast for the senses that I shall always remember.

Jeanne was Undine, in white, of course, veiled with crystally shimmering stuff. Her heavy black hair, under its wreath of water lilies, hung in waves below her knees. She wore no paint, and her face was nearly as pale as her silvery draperies. The character suited her *too* well; she looked as though she might melt away from sight at any moment.

The duchess was very pretty as a Watteau shepherdess.

Muriel was lovely as Night, in black velvet with a diamond collar. In her hair she wore a crown of diamond stars from which hung a black tulle veil spangled with silver. Even Georgette looked well as a Nattier portrait.

Marie was *possessed* to go either as Pocahontas or Columbia. She decided, however, that copper-colored grease paint would be too unbecoming, and I would not let her, as a Frenchman's bride, flaunt the American flag; as it is, the eagle screams quite loud enough every time she speaks. She was perfectly gorgeous, and wonderfully handsome as Cleopatra.

I was Queen Louise. Prince Ulrich wore a Prussian uniform. Comte de la Tour was Athos, a perfect giant. M. Castel was Porthos, De Rachette Aramis, and Sibvorsva was D'Artagnan, of the Three Musketeers.

Raoul was Pierrot. Percy Grafton, in Highland dress, went as bonny Prince Charlie. It is impossible to tell who was the best—it was all too lovely!

We who were stopping in the house, forty-four, I think, dined about nine o'clock in the state dining room. It was very gay, and everyone felt like having a good time. I sat between Richelieu and Li-hung-Chang, and I heard not a word of cleverness or wisdom, only trifling small talk; but it never occurred to me that a moment could have been wasted, even if I was not gathering pearls of wisdom.

The other guests began to arrive

about twelve. Jeanne received them on a dais under a bower of green by the threshold of the great hall door, leading out on the terrace. I certainly had no lack of partners, and they danced so differently from the way we do, that I got painfully dizzy. It seemed as if my head would *never* get untwisted, and I was very glad to go and walk in the garden with Schönberg. The whole scene was enchanting, and as we went down the steps and along the path by the fountains, I was conscious of the brilliancy of the picture, and that we too were adding our share to it. We sat on one of the benches at the end of the allee, and my ideas were as scattered as those of a little urchin who finds himself at the circus.

Suddenly I heard the prince speak close to my ear, and with such ardor that it brought my scattering wits together in a suddenly congealed lump.

"Grace!" he said, in French; "Grace, hast thou really no heart?"

"*What!*" I fairly screamed. "What are you saying, and why do you call me 'Grace' and 'thou'?" And I felt the color dye my face.

"Ah, dear, don't play the baby! What do you suppose I have thought of all these days that I have been following you about like a dog—only living in the light of your beauty? You must know I love you, love you so that I can't think of anything but you! Tell me, Grace, my adored one, give me some hope—when wilt thou be mine?" His hands held mine like a vise, and his voice came in gasps as though he had been running.

"Be yours?" I said. "Let go my hands—you hurt me! You know you are married! How can I be yours?"

"Oh, marriage—bah!" he shrugged his shoulders. "Marriage is an alliance and has nothing to do with love—although, if I could marry you, I am quite mad enough to do it. But, Grace! Ah, Grace!"

With a supreme effort I got my hands free, and stood up. I was shocked, disappointed and outraged—and yet—this man's personality was so strong, and his charm over me so great that I felt my-

self struggling in the waves of his emotion, and my knees threatened to double under me like those of a ball-jointed doll when the elastic is loose.

I concentrated all my will power to shake off this horrible magnetism that was creeping over me. It seemed exactly as though my spine were a keyboard, and some power were playing one note after another upon it, and each note, as it was struck, making rings which spread out to my finger tips, as the rings spread from a stone striking the water.

"To insult me," I said, "I think is the most extraordinary way of showing your love for me. If your attentions mean that you want to dishonor me, the sooner they cease, the better! Good-night!"

Before I could move he caught me by the shoulders, and his face looked down into mine so close that I could see only his glittering eyes. "You devil," he said between his teeth, "you are one of those who think themselves so good and pure! You lead a man on until he is mad, and then you stand up on your high pedestal of virtue! You are all cold-hearted, you Americans, and you are virtuous because you don't know what it is to love! A thousand times better to be a woman who gives all to the man she loves than one who demands all of a man's heart, and then takes refuge within the armor of her outraged propriety when he asks any return from her! You beautiful temptress without a heart!" His fingers pressed on my shoulders so that they still show bluish marks, and he actually shook me.

Then suddenly he stiffened up like a soldier on parade, and said, curtly: "I have behaved violently and unbecomingly. For that, and any other fault I have committed—I beg your pardon." He clicked his heels together, bowed ceremoniously and stalked off.

When I was alone, I almost fell to the bench. The whole thing was like an ugly dream. His insult was outrageous, and it hurt! On the other hand, nearly every woman over here — Am I so much better than they?

Supposing I had loved this prince—loved him really, apart from this fascination he has for me! I had a chill of fear at the thought of what might have happened. It is very hard to keep up a standard all by one's self, when one sees even those whom one would chose as examples following the same course. Even Jeanne—

Louise, I feel as though I were standing on a river's brink, and each day the river rises higher and carries away some of the bank. For all that I know, it may already be undermined, and likely to give way at any moment. What is the use of being good? Nobody credits you with it. They go the whole length themselves, so they suppose everyone else does. They don't believe you if you don't, and they think none the less of you if you do. A woman who has never had a lover, in their eyes is more an object of contempt and pity than anything else.

So I sat all by myself out in the moonlight on the bench, and I felt as though I had been punished and turned out of doors.

You know that dream I have sometimes? I am an opera singer, and I have the most beautiful voice. It rolls out of my throat, pure, limpid, wonderful and tremendous in its power; I sing easily and naturally, and with no more effort than it takes to talk. The audience thunders applause, and I am almost smothered under the flowers which are showered upon me, but I don't stop stronger and purer and sweeter every singing. I go on, and my voice grows minute, and then I take a breath for my last and supremely beautiful note—and no voice comes! No more than I actually have! And then I find myself showered with dry leaves. Their crackly edges prick where they hit, I hear the audience hissing and deriding, the theater becomes suddenly dark—and I wake!

Sibvorsva found me. "I've been looking for you," he said; "I saw you go down the path with Ulrich, and when he came back alone, looking like a thunder cloud, I thought I would go and see with whom he left you. But tell me,

what has happened? You look like a ghost!" And then caressingly as a mother might speak to her child, he exclaimed: "My beloved, you are crying!"

Of course I was crying like an idiot. It only needed a little sympathy to turn on the flood, and Sibvorsva gave me much. So I cried like a baby, used up my own handkerchief, borrowed his, and then felt better!

His way of saying things, and his personality were soothing and comforting, and I was entirely myself in a few minutes. But down in my heart or my brain somewhere, was a feeling that somehow I deserved punishment, not petting, and I felt neither happy nor comfortable the rest of the evening.

Prince Schönberg was talking to a Marie Antoinette; and if he was half as disagreeable as he looked, she was not having a very gay time of it. I passed him often when I was dancing, but he looked through or over me, and apparently did not know I was there, and I have not seen him since.

To-day nearly everyone is leaving, and by to-morrow there will be no one but Raoul, Sibvorsva and myself. I go to Germany on Monday, to stay with Lotta von Bohlen. Sibvorsva is going as far as Berlin with me.

Do you know, it occurs to me that the Schönberg-Grussdow estates are somewhere near the Von Bohlen's. Just suppose he and I should be thrown together—wouldn't it be awful? I wonder what *would* happen!

Oh, dear Louise, why aren't you here!

GRACE.

P.S.—I had a letter from Serge this morning. He is now at the farthest point of Norway, but will come to see me where and when I say. I have written him that I shall go through Paris on my way to England from Germany, and will have him come then.

I have not heard from Lord Bobby since he went away, although he said he was going to send me a book from Paris.

Every time I think of how silly I was when he was here, I hate myself and everything about me. I think I would

rather be an Easter egg than a bad one!

CHAPTER XI.

SCHLOSS ALTSTEIN, BRANDENBURG,
THURSDAY, July 23, —.

DEAREST LOUISE: I was really sorry to leave Chateau de la Tour. Jeanne begged me to stay, and I should probably be there still if I had not written Lotta that I would positively come here on Tuesday.

You know Sibvorsva came to Berlin in the same train. Comte de la Tour drove us to St. Quentin in his motor car, and we took the express train there. We were packed liked sardines, as Jeanne and Raoul also came to see us off. Jeanne's good-by was most affectionate: "You have been *délicieuse, chérie*," she said, "it has been adorable seeing you! Come again soon! Yes, any time send a wire and come. If we have a house full, there is always room for another; if we are alone, then I shall have you all to myself."

"Good-by, you *dear*," I said; "it has been perfect, this visit, and you know I would love to come again!" and then I promised I would tell her when I found the unknown hero of my life; but I could not help laughing at the unlikelihood of her ever hearing from me if I had to wait until I could write *that* news!

As the train came into the station Raoul kissed my hand. No one would ever dream that it had scratched and slapped him years ago. He grasped it warmly and exclaimed: "You have had a *succès fou*, Grace, *ma chère*! Aren't you pleased? May you be just as calm and unruffled and content when I see you again. *Au revoir*!"

Count de la Tour handed me into the train. "We will miss you very much," he said; "come back soon!"

Just as the train started, Raoul whistled a bar of the Wedding March, the silly! Jeanne and her husband laughed, but somehow it annoyed me; I glanced involuntarily at Sibvorsva, but he seemed perfectly unconscious of anything except the angle at which his

dressing-case would best fit the rack above his head.

Our trip was very uneventful, and nothing happened worth writing about. We had to wait a long time at Cologne for the wagon-lit, and we dined at the Cölner-Hof. I saw no one I knew, but there was a German and his wife whom Sibvorsva spoke to. I think they are either very disagreeable people or else they don't like Sibvorsva, as their greeting was very stiff. The night journey was not bad, but the car was so crowded I had to have Kate in my stateroom, and that was not very comfortable. We got to Berlin early in the morning, and I arrived here long before luncheon.

Lotta came down to meet me with a tandem. She had a long list of things to do as usual, so when we arrived at the castle I had barely time to brush the dust off and dab the sponge over my face before luncheon.

This place is really a huge farm, with no end of cows, horses, sheep and pigs. Acres and acres of grain, and the inevitable sugar beets and potatoes. Of course, there are a couple of villages on the estate, also splendid forests and shooting land.

The castle is in the form of a square of stone, very old, very severe and very massive. The moat still surrounds it, and you feel as if you had gone back to the middle ages, as you cross the drawbridge and enter the courtyard.

The rooms are enormous, and they nearly all have black wainscotings and white walls. The main hall and Count von Bohlen's room are covered with stag's horns, each mounted on a wooden shield with a date underneath. My room is so large I walk miles in dressing. The great four-poster, which is actually seven feet square, looks like a little hut out in the corner of a field. One wing of the house is left exactly as it was in the sixteenth century; the floors all of stone, and the walls covered with illuminated inscriptions and pictures. Each room is reached by its own little stone staircase, so that one has to go up and down a dozen stairs to reach all the rooms.

What does Lotta look like? She is

an ash blonde—very pretty for a German woman—with even features and beautiful skin. Not a very good figure—she is too short-waisted, and she is rather plump and thickset. When she was seventeen, she was an ideal Margarethe. She wears her hair licked back, and braided in two or three braids, and wound around like a doormat on the back of her head. It is brushed and brushed, and, when it is as smooth as can be, her maid polishes it further with the palm of her hand. She is always busy; more than that, she is industrious. She marks out a line of conduct, makes a set of rules and regulations, and then should the earth and sun and moon all fall, she would be perfectly oblivious to anything but her plan and rule. For example, she made up her mind that she would learn to paint. She has no artistic ability whatever; absolutely no eye for drawing and no color sense, but she has shut herself up in her studio from ten to twelve every day for five years. She has never gone so far as to paint a picture, but still she persists. As she is like that in everything she undertakes, of course she succeeds—in time!

Her husband is very good-natured, and there are three lines running around each side of his mouth from laughing so much. Her little girl, Elise, is dark like her father, and a perfect imp. The boy, Hans, is blond like his mother, and her one vulnerable spot.

Here they live a regular home life, and I find it restful, for a change. I hardly see Lotta, as she is occupied with something all day until four o'clock, when we have tea. From half-past four until seven we drive. Dinner at eight. When they are alone Lotta reads or embroiders, and the count plays the piano. Does this all sound thrilling? Some neighbors (they live ten miles away) came to luncheon yesterday, and another, a Herr von Taus, came to dinner to-night.

They tell me Prince Schönberg-Grussdow is their nearest neighbor, but if he also is ten miles away, we are quite safe from each other. You know he had a plan to ask the Bohlens and me to go off on an automobile trip, but I think

in his present mood he would run his machine over my crunching bones if he were to meet me in the road.

The weather is perfectly beautiful, and as I have a great deal of time to myself, I generally spend the morning out of doors. On one side of the castle is an old-fashioned flower garden—rows and rows of every kind of flowers—with two long running pergolas bordering it on either side, covered with roses, honeysuckle and grapes. At the far end is a high wall, which breaks into a circular bay with a sun-dial in the center. An iron gateway, with marble benches on either side, leads to the farm beyond.

In front of the castle is a lawn with old trees (probably carefully planted countless years ago), but not laid out on a geometrical principle. On the other side, woody paths, overgrown and wild, run down to the water. Five minutes' walk along the lake brings one to the forest of pines. That is where I usually go, but yesterday I sat in a pasture for about two hours, and did nothing but breathe and watch them making hay in the next field.

It reminded me a little of England. I wonder where Lord Kirth is, Louise, dear? If I had not told him so positively that I cared for no one, and hated marriage—and then been such a silly fool at Chateau de la Tour—He is probably sitting out under the trees or punting on the Thames with an English "gell." Oh, well, what of it!

Count von Bohlen can't understand my interest in the pigs. They simply fascinate me. He has several hundred, all kinds and ages. Those in one house are so like the companions of Ulysses, it is really uncanny. About one hundred of them in a row, all the same size and age, and each one's greedy grunt seeming more hideously horrible than the others.

The schoolmaster in the big village had a silver wedding yesterday. Such a fuss as they made over it! They were serenaded at seven in the morning; I could hear the band even from my room. Then they had a church ceremony, a reception, a dinner, and a dance. We

only went to the reception. Lotta, of course, was given the seat of honor in the corner of the sofa; and I, as a "distinguished stranger," was given the big armchair. The bride was dressed in gray, with a silver myrtle wreath and a long white veil; and the groom wore his evening clothes and a big silver favor.

I am falling asleep as I write. This quiet home life is having the effect of a narcotic. They go to bed so early here that now I can hardly keep awake after ten o'clock. There will be a house full over Sunday, so I shall probably have something outside of pigs and farm life to write about.

Good-night, dear.

Lovingly,

GRACE

CHAPTER XII.

SCHLOSS ALTSTEIN, BRANDENBURG,
SUNDAY MORNING.

DEAREST LOUISE: My doll is stuffed with sawdust, and the sky is lead!

I can't understand these Germans at all, and they can't understand me. They have not an atom of imagination, and they take everything I say in serious earnest—even Lotta—and I am disgusted with all of them to-day. They none of them speak a word of English, and my German goes very lame excepting on the main road. I spoke it perfectly as a child, but as my governess of course always called me "thou," I actually don't know the polite form "you," unless I stop and think it out; therefore, I am sure to make this mistake sooner or later; and as it is more intimate to call a person "thou" than by their Christian name, it is awkward. Stupid things! Shouldn't you think that when I explain that if I say "thou" I don't mean it, that they would understand? Well, they don't or they won't!

I said "Good-morning, how art thou?" to one youth, and he tried to kiss me! Yesterday afternoon a little Baron Schlittenteich asked me to go rowing with him. His hair is bright red and cut *en brosse*, and his vapid face (which had an excess of material used in making its features) wears a perpetual expression of lively surprise. As usual,

before we started I explained my trouble with the language. He *seemed* to understand, and I thought for once it would be all right. He rowed, but with nearly every stroke he caught a crab. He paid not the slightest attention to what he was doing, but apparently thought all was going beautifully.

"Have you *ever* rowed before?" I asked, anxiously.

"Oh, yes!" he exclaimed, with enthusiasm. "I rowed a great deal when I was a student. We used to put on bathing suits, and when we upset, we swam back. I swim very well too!"

I measured the distance to the shore with my eye, and ventured: "Don't you think we had better go back?"

Down went one oar perpendicularly, and the boat lurched over so I thought we were gone.

"Take care!" I screamed, "thou art upsetting us!" He dropped the oars instantly (one into the water where it floated off), flopped down on his knees in the bottom of the boat, and with the most idiotic expression exclaimed rapturously: "Oh, how sweet that sounds! Call me now, Fritz!"

I told him to give the remaining oar to me—carefully—and I used it as a paddle, to get to shore. It would have served another purpose as well, but I restrained myself.

There is a crowd of people stopping here now, but, as they will be gone tomorrow, it is not worth while to describe them.

The Schlittenteich person asked all sorts of questions about me, and said that if I were a widow he would like to marry me. Count Bohlen thought it rather a good joke to tease him, and would not tell him. The animated hairbrush asked me at the table what kind of a widow I was. I felt too bored to be civil, and answered in English: "I'm a grass widow—my husband died of hay fever." No one understood a word; but it made no difference, they would not have laughed if they had. The other day an officer of the Guard-du-Corps, in full dress uniform, was presented to me, and to be agreeable I told him how beautiful I found his appoint-

ments, and he promptly lost his head. Because I told him I thought his clothes lovely, he jumped to the conclusion that I thought he was too!

I can't please these people. If I talk German I call them "thee" and "thou." If I refuse, they say I am disagreeable. If I am polite, they think I am flirting, or at the most, desperately in love with them. And if I am unresponsive, then I wound their sensitive feelings. I am disgusted with everything! I am going to take my book out in the garden and forget everybody—until luncheon.

LATER.

Louise! Please don't be shocked—I can scarcely screw up my courage to tell you—Prince Ulrich and I have declared a truce. To be friends with him again is certainly the last thing I ever expected, and therefore the first thing to happen. I might have known *that*! Have you ever heard a woman declare positively she would not do a certain thing, and then find her doing it?

Do you want to hear about this anticlimax? Stop frowning, and say you love me, or I shall not tell you a word! Well then, it was such a beautiful walk over the springy pine needles and moss, in the shade and along the water, that I went on until I came to a wide brook crossed by an old stone bridge. There had once been a gate on the farther side; one of the posts had entirely crumbled away, but the other was left standing and was surmounted by a lion-rampant, but whether it was a coat of arms or only an ornamentation, I couldn't make out. It was all covered with a tangled mass of vines, and I climbed up on the coping, and leaned against the old post for a back. I was almost hidden in the thick green foliage, and the brook rushing by with its bubbling gurgle was the only sound I heard. My book lay unopened in my lap, and I gave myself up to daydreams and the enchantment of the place.

Suddenly a footstep struck the paving of the bridge, and Prince Ulrich appeared through the gate! He stood

looking out over the lake with a moody expression that I had never seen him wear before.

I sat perfectly still, looking at his profile. He is certainly the most beautiful human being, and he used to be so nice—before he was not! And I was so tired of all these literal automatons and sensitive plants, and so glad to see some one who had some sense of humor, and who could at least understand what I was talking about, that in my mind the breach disappeared entirely, and I only realized how glad I should be to talk to him.

Then he saw me! He looked radiant for the first second, but almost instantly his expression changed to one of anger, and he turned to go. I could not resist the impulse to add a little oil to the flame.

"Have a 'tack'?" I said, flippantly.

"Have a *talk*, did you say?" His voice came from his boots, but the corners of his mouth twitched *up*!

"No. I didn't say 'talk,' I said 'tack.' But I will have a talk if you like."

"Very well," he answered, crossing his arms and looking like the portrait of Napoleon.

"Oh, I am not going to have any conversation with a lowering storm cloud," I said, and shrugged my shoulders. "If you want to sit on the wall peacefully and amiably, and talk to me nicely I should be delighted to put up a white flag, but I don't want any more thunder and lightning." He sat as I suggested, but he looked sulky.

"Well," he said, "here I am, now what do you want with me? I behaved like a brute, but you drove me to it, and I apologized. I love you and you don't love me—so I see no good that can come of our seeing each other. Why do you want to bring me back again?"

"Because nobody in this country understands anything I say or do," I explained, "and I am so alone!" I felt miserably dejected, and I must have looked it, as he took my hand before I even realized that *he* had understood me perhaps as little as anyone. "There are so few people in the world," I continued confidentially, "who are in the least sym-

pathetic, that it is too bad to spoil things that might be so nice!"

"You spoiled everything—I didn't!" he exclaimed.

"You are perfectly crazy! It was all *your* fault!"

"Did you not flirt with me, and lead me on, and then throw me over?"

"I don't think I flirted at all. You *were* attractive to me, and I *did* like you and to be with you. And you insulted me outrageously!"

"I did not mean to insult you," he interrupted. "I told you I would even try to get a divorce, and marry you if you liked. I was perfectly mad about you, anyway; and then—the music and the fête and your beauty—I don't know what you think I, or any other man, is made of! They must be queer men, the Americans, if they are anything like what you expect me to be; certainly you are a queer woman! I know I am attractive to you; I can feel it. And instead of coming to my arms, you say I insult you and get tragic! I don't know what you want! Unfortunately you *look* human, and, unfortunately," he added in a warmer tone, "I love you!"

Again I felt a diverging ring, but I shook it off instantly, and answered with perfect calmness:

"That is not loving *me* at all, it is only loving yourself. I can't take the moral view that lots of women over here do. I don't mean that I am better, because I am not; but I was taught that certain things are terribly wrong, and no amount of arguing can make it right. You say I am tragic; it may be true. If I ever went over the border, I think it would eat my heart out. The world might never know—but I should be branded in my own eyes. If you really loved me, you could never let me feel like that. Please let's forget all about these things! Why can't we be simply friends?" and I held my hand out to him.

He ignored my hand, crossed his arms, and drew up his shoulders, and said, impatiently: "I never had a platonic friendship for any woman, and I don't care to begin one now—especially with you. But I tell you what I will

do," he said, slowly, "I will promise to keep my distance, but I will see you all I can and will do everything in my power to *make* you care for me"—he leaned slightly toward me and his eyebrows ran together—"make you care so much, that you will of your own accord put your arms around my neck! On the other side," he sat up straight again, and spoke indifferently, "you may try to change my views and feelings as much as you can, of course. Will you shake hands on that?" He put out his hand, and I laid mine in it. He gave it one firm pressure, and dropped it.

"How in the world did you come here?" I asked. And in five minutes we were talking and laughing, without a trace of anything besides good-fellowship.

I found that the brook is the dividing line between the Von Bohlen and the Schönberg-Grussdow estates, and that I was actually sitting on his property.

He walked back with me, and stayed for lunch. It *was* nice to have some one to see all the "points" (when there were any). Lotta said they had never seen him before in such a beaming humor.

The prince and Count von Bohlen both have big motor cars, and they are planning an automobile trip. It is not definitely decided upon, although we are all very enthusiastic.

Prince Ulrich has just gone home, but he is coming back to dinner. Lotta and I are going out driving in a few minutes, but I had to tell you that the one black cloud of this summer sky has passed, and, instead of feeling ashamed of myself, I am exceedingly pleased with everything and everyone.

Always devotedly,

GRACE.

CHAPTER XIII.

SCHLOSS ALTSTEIN, BRANDENBURG,
WEDNESDAY, July 29th.

Great and thrilling excitement! The crown prince is coming to spend the night. Louise, my dear, you never saw such a fuss and preparation in your life. Of course, everything is being turned upside down with polishing and clean-

ing; but that is nothing! The rooms selected for his royal highness are being entirely *refurnished* and *decorated*! Workmen from Berlin are working all night to get them done in time. New liveries have been ordered for every servant in the house and stable; new and fast horses have arrived; and the whole road to the station is being rapidly made smooth and stoneless, because his royal highness adores above everything to drive fast horses, and nothing annoys him more than getting on a bad road.

Yesterday Lotta found there was still a long list of things necessary; and, as she was as busy as the proverbial bee, I suggested going to Berlin on a shopping tour for her. Prince Ulrich offered to take me in his motor car, and also promised to prop up my German when it threatened to fall, and to prevent my calling the shopkeepers "thee" and "thou."

We started about half-past twelve; but it had been pouring steadily for twenty-four hours, and the roads were rivers of mud, so that it was after three when we arrived in front of the Bristol; and we decided it was much better to go back by train.

The way one is stared at over here is really an ordeal. Officers stop on the sidewalk and watch one walk past, as though one were a parading freak in the Barnum procession. It is very uncomfortable. Everywhere I go they stare and stare. Prince Ulrich says it's my figure. Perhaps it is, as here most of the women look as though they had been stuck together from an odd assortment of ready-made heads and arms and legs, or else cut out of one piece of wood; an American figure is as much of a wonder as a woman is with us with a head of hair that trails on the ground.

It was rather fun, at first, shopping. We discussed at length which lamp shade was really the prettiest, and whether the sofa cushion I liked was not much nicer than the one he had in his hand. He talked baby-talk to me in his own language, because he says that is the way I pronounce.

It was nearly six when we finished, and a train went at seven; but, as we

could not reach Altstein before half-past nine, we went to the Bristol. I telephoned Lotta, and the prince ordered something to eat.

It was not the hour for dinner, and we waited and waited. I began to get nervous for fear of missing the train. Still no food! His watch said six o'clock. I *knew* it was later than that.

"A quarter to seven, *gnädige frau*," said the waiter, as he showed me the fillet of sole "to be approved of."

"A quarter to seven!" I fairly screamed. "Come quickly; we shall miss the train!"

The prince was helping himself to sole. "There is plenty of time," he said, deliberately. "This looks very good" (meaning the sole). But I jumped from the table to go. On no account did I want to miss the train. The next one would not get us to Altstein until after midnight. In the first place, I did not want to be out all the evening alone with the prince; and, besides, it would mean detailed explanations of *why* we missed the train, and Heaven defend me from German explanations!

"Please be sensible," he said, "and let's have dinner. There is another train."

"You know it does not go until nearly midnight!" I said, excitedly. "It is impossible to wait for that." I seized a loaf of bread, because I *was* hungry, and ran out through the hotel office to the street, and jumped into the first *droschke*.

"Go to the Anhalter station!" I called to the driver, without even stopping to see if Schönberg were following. He was there, and jumped into the carriage as it started. He was furious.

"This is absolute nonsense! What difference do a few hours make in your arrival? I want my dinner."

"Well, then, *you* stay and get your dinner! Stop, driver!" I called.

"Not at all! If you go, I go, too! Go on, driver!" he snapped. "But, at the same time, it is senseless of you!"

I was determined to catch that train, and his anger prevented my being as sorry as I might have been had he been

more amiable. "That sole looked delicious; I did not even taste it," he said, peevishly.

"For Heaven's sake, go back and eat it!" I cried. I was half laughing and half cross, and I again ordered the driver to stop.

"Go on, you blockhead!" He fairly broke his temper on the poor driver, who by this time was mumbling something about "passengers for the mad-house."

We reached the station and the train just in time. A moment more, and we should have lost it. We found an empty carriage. He sat at one end, and I at the other. Neither said a word. He looked as cross as a meat ax; and, as I did not want my head chopped off, I sat in my corner as meek as a lamb, and quite as content. I broke off a piece of bread, and offered it to him. He shook his shoulders like a sulky child, and chewed his finger nails.

"Bread is much better than nails or tacks," I said. And then the storm broke out. How could I behave so? In *nothing* did I show consideration for him! I starved his love, and now I starved his appetite! I was a cruel, heartless woman! Then he told me how he loved me. For a moment he even forgot his food. This was *my* chance.

"Nice way you love me," I said. "All you think of is food."

"It isn't true! I *adore* you! You know I do. Have I not been an angel? And do I not behave in every way you want? And you—you starve my heart; and now," he fairly wailed, "I did not taste the sole!"

I burst out laughing; but I *did* feel a little mean, and very sorry. "Here, honey, have some bread and you will feel better," I said, coaxingly. "Open its mouth." I went over toward him and put a little piece in his mouth and a big piece in his hand; but we had very little conversation. Every time we looked at each other he drew his eyebrows together, and I giggled. It was so ridiculous to see a grown man in such a fury over the loss of a little food!

Count Bohlen came down to the station to meet me, and asked the prince

to go home with us to supper. At the word "supper" my ardent adorer braced up; and when, a little later, we had broiled trout and chicken and hot biscuits, his real beauty of disposition asserted itself; he actually said good-night in a good humor.

The royal visitor comes to-morrow. I hope the things we bought will meet with his august appreciation.

The day he leaves we start on our trip. It is all decided upon. We are going through the Thüringer and Schwarzwald, to Baden-Baden. Lotta and her husband, a Baron and Baroness von Roblach, Count Sibvorsva, Herr von Taus, Prince Ulrich and I, make up the party. If we don't squabble, it ought to be very nice. Good-by for to-day.

Devotedly, GRACE.

FRIDAY.

P.S.—I forgot to mail this, stupid that I am! His highness has just come, and all his retinue with him. The procession has passed, leaving the empty boxes and orange peels. He was awfully nice—perfectly simple and natural. But——!

When he left he thanked the count for his hospitality, told him he had enjoyed it immensely; but what *particularly* pleased him was that he had been allowed to feel perfectly at home, *without any special preparation having been made!*

This morning we are going off on our trip, to be gone about a week; and then I go to Paris. I have at last written Serge that I will meet him there on the eighth. Glorious! We are going to be like two children in holiday time, with no grown-ups in the whole world. That *will* be freedom! Then I am going to know how it feels to dance on air.

Serge is as nice as Schönberg and Lord Bobby together. The Russian prince has not the overpowering magnetism of the German; but, on the other hand, he won't strain my nerves like a continually-threatening volcano. Serge is also quite as interesting a companion as Lord Bobby, and even more fun to go about with, as he has so much more recklessness and gayety. When I am

with Lord Bobby, I always have a slight but distinct dissatisfaction with my own frivolousness; with Serge I shall not care a rap. We are going to be amused and laugh all day, and that is all we care about.

Seriously, there is one thing I do vaguely realize—it is *awful* to have so many moods. It is actually depraved to be so complex (please don't say so promiscuous!) that I need so many persons to satisfy the different sides of my nature. When I feel buoyant, and simply want to tread the "primrose path of dalliance"—there is Serge. On my pretty days, when I want admiration, and, above all, excitement—there is Prince Ulrich! But that is just the trouble. He is *too* exciting.

Louise, to you, and to you only, I must make a confession. You are my safety valve; otherwise I should be even more afraid than I am. It is very simple to sit up here in my room and feel safe and sure of myself; but when I am alone with him and in certain moods—Thank Heaven that, at least, he does not know it, or he would take me in his arms; and at the thought of *that* I get cold all over.

But there is still another side. When I am alone, and the mists of my soul creep out of the darkness like question marks; when the pretty, painted side is dusty and the wheels are rusty and go around in jerks, or won't go at all, Lord Bobby's strong face comes so vividly before me that I feel his eyes must really be looking at me; and then—I think of something else. Did I ever tell you that he sent me "Marpessa"—a poem by Stephen Phillips? I wonder why he sent it? At least, he means nothing personal. I have had several letters from him—one could put them in the ice box to keep the cream cold!

CHAPTER XIV.

ITTER'S HOTEL, HOMBURG V. D. HÖHE,
SATURDAY NIGHT, August 1st.

DEAREST LOUISE: As you see, we have come as far as Homburg. My head is spinning so that my writing is probably running every which way.

The road was so curved, and we came at such a pace, that I am half seasick. I feel that I have done enough motor-ing in two days to last all my life.

We left Altstein yesterday morning, and each hour the country became prettier. We stayed the first night in a big summer hotel in the Thüringen Wald, full of German Jews and shopkeepers. A "hop" was in full blast, and we were much amused. They danced the Virginia reel—without the reel. The master of ceremonies, exploding with importance and beaded with perspiration, formally invited us to dance.

An American drummer sauntered up to me, and, extending his hand, said: "Have a turn?"

"No, thank you," I answered.

He put out his chin in the most impertinent way as he swaggered off, and exclaimed to Lotta: "Who's y'r haughty friend?"

We slept in paper-walled rooms, and had little beds with sheets and blankets—too small in every direction. We started again about daybreak this morning, and have gone steadily all day, excepting when we stopped for lunch. Sibvorsva and I, in the prince's sixty-horse-power Mercedes, Von Taus with the Bohlens in their Panhard, and the Roblachs alone in theirs.

The prince's machine is simply wonderful, and compared with the others that I have been in, as a Brewster brougham with a "rockaway." Do you remember the couple Sibvorsva and I saw in Cologne? They were the Von Roblachs, and the reason they would not bow to Sibvorsva was because they thought *me* a "queer person." Lotta said the baroness was horrified when she saw me.

"Great Heaven, Lotta! You are not associating with *that* sort of woman, are you? I am sure she is the same one I saw with Sibvorsva alone at the hotel in Cologne!"

"Of course she is; and what of it?" said Lotta, in her cool, decided way. "They came on to Berlin together from the De la Tour house party. She is a dear, and one of my best friends."

"Really? I am so glad to hear it,"

purred the baroness. "It would have been a misfortune if we had kept such a wrong impression of her."

Lotta told me this conversation as a sort of mild curtain lecture, to show how people might look at things. She thinks the baroness is lovely in every way; maybe she is, but there is something about her I don't like. She seems very sweet, but a little too much at peace with her own conscience. Lotta is the nicest sort of a person; she says exactly what she thinks and means, and nothing else; so she takes everything everyone else says at the same value.

It is awfully nice and very gay here, with no end of people we know. At the tennis courts this morning the first person I saw was Marie Villon. She rushed up and kissed me with her usual effusiveness. You can imagine the horror of the baroness at this breach of decorum, but I did not care a bit; I was too glad to see Marie. She was looking particularly handsome, and was, as usual, brimming over with enthusiasm. We sat together to watch the tennis, but we had very little chance for "*conversation intime*," as Schönberg and Sibvorsva (who were as overjoyed as I at seeing Marie) were listening, and joining in all we said. It seemed to me that Marie used more slang than ever; but it probably was only that I noticed it more after not hearing any for so long.

The Villons have been stopping here with the dowager vicomtesse ever since they left Chateau de la Tour, and are going back to France to-day.

I don't know whether Armand married her for love or not; but I really think he loves her now, and he certainly understands how to make her happy.

"How do you find Marie?" he asked me, leaning over the back of my chair.

"I think she is more attractive each time I see her," I said. His face lit up with pleasure as he answered:

"I think so, too. She becomes more charming every day. I have a theory, you know, that there need be no unhappy marriages. If men would only take as much trouble to succeed with their wives as they do with their sports

life would be more agreeable for most of them. I love the world and people, and I want to bring all the gayety I can to my old chateau; but, at the same time, I mean that Marie shall be the center of it. I want her to keep her joyousness and her brightness; for where the wife is happy the whole house reflects it."

"You don't know how glad I am to hear you say that," I said, "and I think you have exactly the right idea, particularly in Marie's case. Her greatest attraction is her perfect naturalness—the air of wholesome gladness that actually radiates from her presence. She is the most refreshing and inspiring person I know. She always makes me think of country fields and golden-rod at home."

"What are you two chattering about me? In French, too, so that I can't understand half of it!"

"The vicomte has been telling me how sorry he is that he is married to such an impossible bore as you are," I laughed.

"You're another!" she exclaimed, joyously. "Among adores the very ground I walk on! By the way, though, I think I know some one who adores you. A big, good-looking Britisher. Can you guess? We talked a lot about you."

"I can't imagine whom you mean," I said.

"Oh, dear, no; she can't imagine!" gayly taunted Marie; "but she is pinky-pink all over! Well, then, as you certainly can't be interested in a total stranger, I won't tell you what Lord Kirth said about you."

My heart suddenly began its idiotic mazourka. I was so astonished that she had seen Lord Bobby. "When was he here? Do tell me what he said! Ah, please! I love so to hear nice things!"

"Oh, no! So you think they were nice things?" she teased; and then turned her undivided attention to the tennis. "Good play! Doherty volleyed that beautifully."

"What did he say?" I asked; but she had become apparently stone-deaf.

"You know I think it is a perfect shame that we are going just as you

people come. I think Homburg is great, anyway."

"I am sure you have been having a '*grand succès*.' Yes?" the prince asked her.

"I have been having the time of my life! I just love it over here in Europe. Once in a while I get sort of homesick for popper and Chicago, but I am going back in the spring for a visit."

"You never told me what Lord Kirth said," I persisted.

"Oh, about the Britisher!" said Marie, carelessly. "He didn't say much; only it did not take great penetration on my part to see that he was crazy about you."

"What *did* he say?"

"He just handed out a few stiffish remarks about admiring your sweet disposition and character more than your beauty; although, to use his very words, he called you a most 'beautiful creature.' 'Beautiful creature!'—wouldn't you know an Englishman said that?" and Marie bubbled with laughter.

But the fact of Lord Bobby's saying that he admired my character completely took my breath away. How can he, when I am so utterly frivolous? I almost wish I were not. I don't know, though; I am too full of the joy and excitement of living. I just want to keep fluttering about, and think of nothing but how to get the most amusement out of these days of my youth.

Schönberg, Sibvorsva and I went to the station to see the Villons off. They had quite a reception, and Marie was in wonderful spirits.

To my delight, I saw the dowager vicomtesse leaning on Marie's arm and talking to her with the manner she uses towards Jeanne or one of her other favorites.

"Ah! it is Grace," she said, turning to me. "My dear child, let me have a good look at you;" and she put up her *lorgnon*.

"Is it possible this can be you? What a little *gamine* you were when you were here under the care of your poor great-aunt. Come, let us have a little chat together." She left Marie's arm for mine, and we walked down the platform.

"You have become very pretty, Grace.

I wonder if you have become more circumspect?"

"Not much, I am afraid. I may show my war paint and feathers any minute," I laughed.

"Marie is devoted to you. She has talked so much about you. I wonder if you have really improved. Had you been a little French girl, I should have had very serious doubts about you; but I am becoming less and less apprehensive about you young Americans, as I am growing to understand Marie. When Armand first brought her to us I had continual heart agitation; I assure you we were all on the verge of a crisis of nerves. But I am very happy now. Armand is much to be congratulated in having such a charming wife, and one who is as good as she is beautiful."

I did not have a chance to tell Marie what her mother-in-law said about her, but I will write her; as I really think to have won the esteem of great-aunt's most intimate friend is a triumph of which to be proud.

We had a big lunch party to-day, and to-night we are all dining with little Baron Casteau, whom we saw at the tennis courts this morning. There are lots of celebrities here. Poor royalty! the way it has to bow from the waist, swaying backwards and forwards the entire time it is out of doors! I would rather do washing; for then, at least, the people would appreciate that it is hard work.

LATER.

I am just back from a drive with Schönberg in his motor car. We went to Königstein—an old ruin not far from here, on top of a little hill as steep as a sugar loaf. It was the most awful struggle for the automobile to get up to the ruin! Something was decidedly wrong, and the engine missed explosion continually. The chauffeur was already running beside us to lighten the weight.

"Don't you want me to get out?" I asked.

"No, not yet," he answered; "but if I tell you to, can you jump without hurting yourself?"

"Of course I can," I said. I had never tried to get off a moving vehicle

in my life, but surely it was easy enough. We were nearly at the top of the hill when a horse coming down became frightened. The prince had to swerve the machine over to the side of the road, where the going was particularly bad. We almost stopped, and he called to me suddenly: "Jump now!"

I stood on the broad step, gathered my skirts up to avoid their catching, faced forward, and jumped off sideways with both feet close together.

It was exactly as if some one had suddenly hit me between the shoulders and thrown me down; my knees struck the stony road like hammers.

I jumped up, and, to Schönberg's shouted inquiry, answered that I was all right. He disappeared over the top of the hill, and I then realized that I was hurt. My knees were cut, I knew, because I could feel the silk of my stockings scrunching into them, so that each step made me feel nauseated and faint.

I had gone no distance at all when I saw Prince Ulrich running down the road toward me.

"You are hurt!" he cried, as soon as he came near. "Why did you not tell me that you have never jumped? Poor little one! You look so as a ghost!" His English always becomes a literal translation under excitement.

"Here," he commanded, "I must carry you." And, without heeding my protest, he picked me up as easily as I might a baby, and marched up the hill.

As soon as my weight was off my knees and I did not have to move them, they stopped aching, and I became more and more conscious of being in Schönberg's arms. I could feel his heart beating against me, and his breath on my neck. There seemed to be little clutching vibrations which rolled like waves over me.

Two voices within me whispered. One said: "Everything is humdrum; you eat and sleep, and dress, eat and sleep again. Why run along the groove with the rest of the sheep? On the other side of the stone wall is Prince Charming; he attracts you, and you him; he is *beautiful, beautiful*; you have only to put out your hand!"

"No," said the other voice; "it is bad; it is low!"

"You know nothing about it," said the first. "The French are the gay, happy ones. Follow them!"

Oh, Louise, Louise! You have no idea what it was like! You *can't* have—because I never could have understood unless I had gone through it. The very memory of it makes my blood run cold.

I have said—and I thought I meant it—that I wanted to be a moth, and did not mind singeing my wings. All the same, there was a mental reservation of absolute confidence in my own power of resistance. But here, to my terror, I found myself scorching in real fire, where I was in danger of destruction at any moment. I seemed actually swept away from myself, and utterly powerless to come to my own rescue. And I must save myself quickly or I should have no strength left.

I shut my eyes; one of my hands gripped his shoulder, and my cheek lying on it was burning. What should I do? To insist upon walking might show my vulnerability. I tried to say my multiplication tables. It was of no use. I felt him clasp me tighter; his chin brushed my ear. I felt my moral barriers slipping. Suddenly Lord Bobby's face came before me. He looked at me exactly as he did in the hall at Chateau de la Tour. "Remember, I believe in you absolutely," his voice seemed to repeat.

I buried my eyes in my arm, and his face grew more and more distinct. "Keep faith in me, Lord Bobby!" I thought. "For as long as you trust me I will be worthy."

It was as though a cool hand had been laid on my throbbing head. The temptation passed, and when the prince lifted me into the car again I was altogether myself.

Ah, Louise! little does Lord Kirth know how much I may have to thank him for to-day. I have come through the experience unscathed. Prince Ulrich, beautiful and charming as he may be, has no fascination for me any more!

When we got back, Lotta sent for a

doctor to bandage my knees. They hurt less now, and by to-morrow I hope to be able to limp about.

It is so attractive here that we are going to stay a couple of days longer before going to Baden.

Always devotedly, GRACE.

CHAPTER XV.

HOTEL STEPHANIE, BADEN-BADEN,

THURSDAY, August 6th.

DEAREST LOUISE: I think this is the nicest hotel I have ever been in. Pretty and comfortable rooms, and delicious food. And it is a most beautiful place. The balcony, which opens out of my window on a terrace and the canal, is really too lovely. There are the queerest-looking people here—very dressy and rolling in money and chins. However, it makes very little difference to us, as there are enough in our party to make us independent.

Schönberg treats me now as though I were about two years old, and looks after me as though he were my nurse. Sibvorsva asks me every morning to marry him; is miserable for about ten minutes, and then apparently forgets all about it for the rest of the day.

One thing, my dear—I don't like the baroness. When you first meet her, you think what a saint she is. She tells you of all the good she has done, and all the noble thoughts she has. She rather poses as a patient martyr, surrounded by trials and tribulations which she bravely meets with a sweet smile. She damns everyone with faint praise, and slaughters wholesale with her "*buts*." "Ach, Minna!" she coos, for instance; "Minna is a beautiful girl, and so sweet; her skin is not so *very* bad, do you think? Of course, she *has* a temper; but we must try and put up with these things. We are none of us perfect."

This sounds all right the first time, until it occurs to you that no one ever noticed that "Minna" had either a bad skin or a temper until this sanctimonious, sugared quinine pill found it out.

For some reason or other, I am sure she does not like me. I can't think of

anything in which I could have offended her; so it is probably just antipathy. To everyone she starts with: "Mrs. Trevis is very amusing; it is too bad she allows a married man to pay her so much attention, even if his wife is crazy. I don't believe he really likes her; but Americans are attractive as a novelty."

She brought up the Cologne episode to the prince, and said what a pity it was that I put myself in such a position. "I am sure," she said, "Count Sibvorsva would admire her more if she had been more circumspect."

"Doubtless," said the prince, sarcastically, "it is to save her reputation that he asks her each day to marry him."

"Ach! what a noble man!" purred the baroness.

It is trying to feel all the time that you are under the eyes of a detective who will invent motives that you never dreamed of, and I shall be glad to get away from her.

Lotta and I nearly lost our minds with joy over the Gesellschafts mineral bath this morning. We put on slippers and hats, and long automobile coats over our nightgowns. When we got there the bath attendants stared open-mouthed with astonishment at the way we had come. "In a landau, and up the main street—what an idea!" And yet no one would have known it. They gave us heavy cotton chemises and crash slippers that were made to fit giants, and we shuffled and flapped along through hot rooms, steam rooms and scrub rooms, with the most *awful* Rubens models steaming around, and being pummeled. We were not enchanted with these surroundings, so we went directly to the plunge baths; and they were perfectly glorious. The tepid, deep one was empty, and we had it all to ourselves. Imagine swimming around in a big, white marble basin full of delicious, lukewarm, bubbly Apollinaris! I did not want to leave it at all. It was the first time for at least two weeks that I have been comfortably warm. Imagine freezing in August! But it is as cold as Greenland, and there are *never* any fires. We dine out of doors in the thinnest dresses. To-morrow night I leave for Paris—and

Serge. I feel so excited about it, and I wonder how it will be.

My whole summer so far has been a perfect dream. I certainly have been a "*succès fou*," and I don't know how I could have had more of my own way. There have been very few cross currents, and I have enjoyed every minute of my liberty. But I am glad to go to-morrow. This morning Von Taus asked me to marry him; Sibvorsva is beginning to look grieved, and the baroness does annoy me. It is disagreeable to have to be with a person who is continually scratching while she is apparently purring you.

To-night, after dinner, we went to the Kurhaus to hear the music, as usual. It was rather stupid, as they played indoors instead of out, and there was a feeble sort of dance going on. My knees are still too lame for dancing, and the baroness and I were sitting alone together for a minute, when the prince asked me to go out on the terrace with him. I felt the baroness gathering for a pounce, so I refused.

"Please come, Mrs. Trevis," he begged. "You are going to-morrow, and I have lots of things I want to say to you." So I went. We sat out on one of the benches and talked for ages about all sorts of things. Finally we came to the discussion we had had in the woods, and I said, laughingly: "Well? And are you going to follow me to-morrow?"

He shook his head.

"Don't you love me any more?" I pouted.

"I love you too much," he said, slowly.

"Then your ideas about the rights of love have changed?" I asked.

"Not at all," he answered, with a tenderness of which I had believed him incapable. "I feel just the same, only I begin to understand your nature—or the effect of your bringing up—and I know that you are *au fond* tragic. I think it would ruin your life, and that you would consider an unforgivable crime what most of my acquaintances consider an episode. I don't think any better of you for it, and I would give anything

for my sake if you were different. But I realize your nature—its limitations, if you like—and love you enough to leave you to-morrow."

There was something very like a break in his voice.

I wonder if he had any idea of how nearly my arms went around his neck at that moment.

GRACE.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE TRAIN BETWEEN PARIS AND CALAIS,

August 13th.

Louise, dear, please let us sit down together alone, and quietly think it out. There is a vague consciousness of disappointment, not keen enough for unhappiness, but a certain sense of being off the key. And yet there is nothing actual; nothing has happened that can account for my frame of mind. I would like to throw myself out flat on the seat of this carriage and cry. I know I have nothing to cry about; and yet—there is a sense of loss.

However, let me tell you everything, and your dear, wise head may set it all straight.

I left Baden-Baden so early in the morning that the baroness was not up. I saw her maid coming out of her room with her breakfast tray; and, as she had gone to bed when Schönberg and I returned to the hotel the night before, I asked if I might make my adieus. The maid, however, came back with the message that the "Frau Baronin was sleeping, and that she dared not disturb her."

Of course, there was no possible reason why she was obliged to receive me; but still the perfectly *gauche* lie made my cheeks burn. I turned into Lotta's room, and, of course, like a baby, I blurted it out.

"Ah, you poor!" said Lotta, sympathetically, "you do such imprudent things. You sat out in the Kurgarten *tête-à-tête* with Schönberg for two hours last night. You are too young and far too conspicuous to allow yourself this recklessness. I know you for a dear, but it would make me a joy if you would be more prudent. The

baroness is a jealous—no, I won't scold any more; but I wish you would find yourself a good husband to take care of you. Sibvorsva would not control you at all. Von Taus would be more suitable, but—you will find yourself a husband, won't you? And you will come back and stay with us often when you are married?" She kissed me affectionately on both cheeks. "*Auf wiedersehen!*" she called, cheerfully, as I left the room. It was very evident that Lotta felt a responsibility that she would like to shift on the shoulders of my "good husband."

As I ran down the staircase my spirits revived. In the hall I found Von Bohlen, the prince, Sibvorsva and Von Taus, and they all walked to the station with me. Each had a present for me of books or flowers, or both. I had a moment to speak to Sibvorsva alone:

"You are going to see Serge this evening?" he said, wistfully. "You certainly dare things a French or German woman would not. However, it may be only what you call the 'green-seeing beast,' because I am not Serge Orlofsky. *Au revoir, chère madame*, and remember you have only to send a wire when you would like to be a countess."

The prince said very little—a few trivial remarks about two books he gave me. Then he laughingly teased me about my German accent, and wondered if it would be grown up the next time we met.

The train started, and they all called messages at once so that I heard none of them. Kate wrapped my rug around me, gave me my cushion, and I settled myself in my corner to dream. How would Serge be, I wondered? I had met two others since—this German Adonis and Lord Kirth. It is aggravating, every time I sit down to think—enter Lord Bobby! I didn't want him, and I conjured up Serge as I had last seen him.

Serge, I thought, how will you be? Shall I find you as fascinating as Schönberg, as clever as Lord Bobby? Will you still be the dazzling nobleman, the ideal companion, that I picture? Shall I find myself in love at last?

As the train neared the station my heart nearly stood still. I was on the summit of the realization of my freedom from conventionality. This was the time for me to annihilate Mrs. Grundy for once and for all. Three years ago Serge left me at the station, and I wore (because he liked it particularly) a yellow linen dress, very plain and severe, and a very smart little black hat. When one has been away from some one for long it is quite natural to bridge the space that absence has made and take up the thread where it was left off. To help this as much as I could on my side, I got off the train in, as nearly as possible, a duplicate of the yellow linen and black hat.

It went beautifully! He was so glad to see me, he laughed out loud at everything. Giggled almost, out of pure joy. And I—I was in the same mood. I had wired to have dinner ready for two in my *salon*—and there we were. Just he and I—in fact, he and I practically alone in Paris! His rooms were at the Castiglione, and we arranged a series of wig-wag signals, by which we could send messages from our balconies, so that it was almost as though we could talk to each other from our rooms.

After dinner, we talked and talked of all that had happened to him and to me, and he laughed and congratulated me on the fact that my philosophy was becoming, in many ways, like his own. Why might not two people who are congenial be able to go about together without the thought of anything further than friendship? People who believed platonic friendship impossible were idiots or sensualists.

Paris, deserted by fashionables in September, seemed a big, gay playground just for him and me.

He hired a motor car, and each day we drove out and lunched in the country—Versailles, St. Germain, even Fontainebleau. We saw things together, discussed everything, and were like children—happy for the day, with no thought or care for the morrow. Every now and then he would ask: "Are you happy, Grace?" And I would nod and smile back at him.

We dined together every evening, and went to a play. I was certainly following my own motto exactly—never mind what you appear to do if you are all right. We gave the conventionalities no thought whatever. The other night was amusing. We were in a box at the Folies Bergères. In the *entr'acte* three Americans, a man and two women, were standing in the aisle and leaning on the rear railing. They were talking with voices that proclaimed their nationality, and discussing everything around them, and finally me. They could not decide whether I was a duchesse or a "cawcot," but they found my appearance very different from all others there. The man said I was American; but he was completely snubbed by his companions, who agreed that "Americans can't speak French like that. Besides, you can see she's a Parisyon!"

For three days (each one was as perfect and as unreal as a dream) the whole situation was bohemian and delicious. I was perfectly happy, and I know Serge was, and then there seemed to be a change. At least I felt it.

One day when we were lunching at Versailles I saw Von Weissen.

"You don't mind, do you, if I take a great interest in you?" he asked, apologetically, but earnestly. "I have seen you several times lately with Orlofsky. I am sure you are very well able to take care of yourself; you know how to hold on to your heart, and give the reins to your head. Orlofsky is the most charming man in the world, but God help the woman who loves him! He is like a child who longs for a toy, and, when he gets it, must pull it apart and see how it is made. Show him the pretty painted outside, but never let him see how the wheels go around."

Serge came up at that moment. "You are talking idiotic nonsense, I am sure," he said, laughing; "and it is time we were starting back."

I did not care what Von Weissen said. I knew it all perfectly well myself; nevertheless it jarred. Why can't people let me alone and stop advising me?

That night we dined at Armenonville.

So far we had seen no one we knew except Von Weissen; but, as we sat down at table, I found myself facing Mr. and Mrs. Saltus, Mrs. Manning and a couple of men. Suddenly and without warning my spirits went out like a snuffed candle. I became uncomfortable and irritated. Why should I feel uncomfortable? To dine alone with a man whom I know as well as I do Serge may be unconventional; but, as my whole determination had been to defy conventionalities, surely I could not mind that. Mrs. Manning is a cat! I would not mind in the least if it had been any other woman, but she makes a scandal out of everything. I could see her scribbling to Newport by the next mail: "Grace Trevis is going about Paris alone with Prince Orlofsky." Well, so I was. What difference could it make? I know I am all right, and grandmama's ghost might come and see and hear everything I did and said. But I was undeniably *distracte*, and he did not seem very much amused.

We went to the play, and there I saw Julia Carter and some more people I knew; I began to realize that I *did not like to be seen!* The more I realized that, the more furious I got with myself. Could it be possible that, after all, I was afraid of Mrs. Grundy? And the more I thought of it, the more I chafed at the idea, and the more frantic I became. I was certainly not an amusing companion. Neither of us enjoyed the play.

The next morning (which was yesterday), Julia Carter came to see me. "You won't misunderstand me, will you, Grace?" she stammered; "but lots of people have seen you with that foreigner you were alone with last night. Are you engaged to him?"

"When I am engaged and want people to know it, I will announce it," I said. She meant it kindly, no doubt, and I was rude; but I was exasperated. After she left, I got a cable that Lucy had been operated on, and at the same time I saw the dividend had passed on one of my principal holdings. I was anxious about my sister, and worried about my income, and Mrs. Manning's

supercilious bow and Julia's remarks finished my temper.

When Serge came to see me, he found me in the dumps. I poured out my string of woes. He was sorry about Lucy, fairly anxious about my income, but distinctly bored over the Mannings and Julia.

He poked the carpet absent-mindedly with his stick, and said: "What shall we do? After we get back from Fontainebleau, shall we dine at Paillard's?"

I could not make up my mind. Was it really "fast" to dine out with him? Unconventionality sounds a nice word, but "fast" is a hideously ugly one! In my own mind I only half wanted to go to lunch. He shrugged his shoulders, and said I must judge for myself. If I felt doubtful about it, we could dine at the hotel; or maybe I might like to dine by myself. He was perfectly amiable. Did I want to go to the play? If so, what one? I thought we had better go in a *loge grillé*.

"If you like," he answered. He opened his cardcase to look at the road map, and as he did so a letter fluttered out, and, caught by the wind, blew over on my lap. I picked it up to return it to him, and the big writing of a distinctly written line blazed out before my eyes: "My sacrifices. Darling, tell me that you have not changed!" and below the words, "after all your love——"

It must have been the second sheet of a letter, and an Austrian count's crown was at the top of the page. The handwriting was very pretty, and the words gripped my own heart. The unhappiness and despair of their appeal made me exclaim: "Oh, Serge, who is she? Why have you treated her like that?"

"Like what, you goose?" he said. "That letter is not about me; it is about another man." He did not look at me as he spoke, and I had the feeling that he was lying.

Stupidly I pressed the subject.

"But what did this man do? And what sort of a woman is she?"

He was decidedly annoyed. He shrugged his shoulders impatiently, and answered crossly: "She is a stupid,

sentimental woman; her affairs do not concern us." He went to the window and looked at the sky. "If we are going to Fontainebleau, we ought to be starting."

All the way out we said nothing. But we never do, as his attention is given to driving the car. Two or three times he turned to me and asked: "Are you happy?" or "Are you comfortable?" and I smiled back "Yes." But all the time there was before me the picture of a woman—the Austrian countess—breaking her heart for him, while he was smiling at me and asking, "Are you happy?"

We lunched at the Hotel de France et d'Angleterre. The luncheon was delicious, it was a beautiful day, and the place with its bay trees and daisies made a surrounding which soon put Serge in a contented humor. He was at his most charming and best, and I gradually forgot the effect of Julia and the letter, and my bad news.

After luncheon we went through the palace. It should have been a perfect afternoon, but it wasn't. The complete pleasure of seeing things, or of doing things, is to see or do them with some one who is sympathetic. I was conscious of that this day.

Serge hired a special guide so we could go through the palace by ourselves. He talked to the guide and took a great interest, and every now and then he would remark to me that this was pretty or that he did not care for that; but there was no sympathy. He cared no more whether I were pleased with what I saw than if the guide were pleased; his mind was entirely centered on his own impressions; and, if I happened to express his opinions cleverly, he was delighted with me.

Unconsciously my thoughts went back to the day when Lord Bobby and I went over the same grounds; and I felt a little homesick over it. Was anyone ever so nice to see things with?

I always thought the greatest charm of Serge was his companionship. I know he has a cold heart, but I thought he had an appreciative mind. But what good is appreciation, if one is utterly

selfish and unsympathetic? Serge likes things himself, Lord Bobby likes to have me enjoy things with him. That day at Versailles he was like a child who shows you his most precious toys, and wistfully awaits your approval. Your liking them or not does not change his love for them, but your appreciation makes his contentment complete.

Perhaps I became disagreeable and critical. Every few hours I discovered a flaw in the perfection of this time. Coming home the road was thick with dust, and my veil must have slipped, as my hair was caked with pasty white clay. Kate brushed and brushed, and it would not come out, so I stuck my head in the basin; my hair was clean and fluffed again, but I kept Serge waiting nearly twenty minutes for dinner. I had ordered it for eight o'clock, and the waiter had served it promptly; the fish was cold, and the rest dried up; my companion was amiable, but I could see it cost him an effort, as he was rather grumpy to the waiter.

At the play it was a repetition of Fontainebleau. He was amused, but he never noticed if I were laughing. In the *entr'acte* he stared about the house and commented on the people he saw.

"That was really a good play," he announced, as we left. "I was glad to see it again. I went the night before you came with some English people. They could not understand half of it, and kept asking me 'What was that?' and 'What are they laughing at?' I had a beastly evening. How could they expect me to know anything about it if I had to translate all the time?"

It was very difficult, in fact, obsolete, French; but I had not asked him to translate once. He never noticed *that*.

Decidedly I was peevish. Louise, dearest, I wonder why I was peevish. I had everything just as I wanted. Could anything have been more glorious? And yet, somehow, it was not glorious at all!

On my way home I sent a telegram to Maud that I would arrive at "The Oaks" to-night. I did not tell Serge what I had wired until we got to the hotel. He was actually wrought up over my leaving, and came up in my

salon for a little while to talk to me about it. He begged me not to go. Why did I want to run off suddenly?

"I don't want you to go," he said, sulkily. "There isn't anybody who is as clever and pretty as you; you have a really nice disposition. I don't *want* you to go, Grace," he said, abruptly, as one to whom a brilliant idea had just occurred. "Why don't you stay and marry me?"

I must say I was surprised. I could not answer seriously. "You want to marry me? Why, Serge, you *hate* marriage! And how about your estates?"

"That's true," he acknowledged, thoughtfully twisting his mustache. "However, I have quite decided that you would be a very nice wife. It would be charming to see you sitting by the fire in my big hall at home, and have you to go about with when I want you."

"But I can't marry you," I said. "You don't love me in the least."

"Of course you can, dearest; you are quite wrong. I do love you. You are the only person in the world who never bores me." And he added, as one conferring a favor: "I like the idea of your being the Princess Orlofsky very much."

"I have told you I *can't*. Thank you all the same, Serge, for asking me."

"You mean you won't marry me?" he asked with absolute astonishment. "Why?"

"For lots of reasons. In the first place, you don't love me—no, my dear, you don't; but the second reason is just as important—I am not in love with you! Come, say good-night and think of me as I have always been to you—a good friend, and an amusing companion whom you look forward to seeing every now and then as a break in the monotony of existence."

This morning he saw me off at the station; his pressure of my hand was the same as ever; he looked down into my eyes just before he put me into the carriage and said, with great tenderness: "Good-by, dearest; we will see each other again soon?"

"I think you *are* fond of me, aren't you, Serge?" I said.

"Of course I am, Grace," and he added, enunciating each word separately and slowly, "more fond than of *anything in the world!*" He kissed his hand to me from the platform, and, as the train drew out of the station, columns blotted his brown head from my sight.

There is really an ache in my heart, for somehow an idol is broken.

Ah, Serge, Serge, what a queer friendship yours and mine has been, and on what was it built? My sunny weather friend! The most charming, the most scintillating man in the world, but, like the butterfly, you must have sunshine or you don't glisten; you must have honey to sip in order to live—to-day from a lily, to-morrow from a rose. Change, and sunshine and gayety you need; and, being a man, can get it.

I thought my own will was a law sufficient unto myself, and that I, too, might have change and sunshine, at no cost; but we are all born under certain laws, and we must follow those laws or become other species.

I believed myself to be free, and find I am bound hand and foot. A young woman alone in the world is the most dependent creature in it, and the better looking she is, the greater dependence. At home in her husband's house, her position and honor are unquestioned, until she does something decidedly wrong. Alone, she is looked upon as a very questionable person, until she has established herself firmly along the lines prescribed by my old enemy, Mrs. Grundy.

Serge's views are all right for Serge, and perhaps I still wish they might be for me; no, the idol is broken, and I feel the pity, the waste of it all. His great capabilities have no aspirations. His sensibilities are fed on selfish pleasures, and quickly cloyed. In the lofty galleries of his mind are stored experience and knowledge, but egotism has robbed him of sympathy, understanding and heart.

Serge has taken the wrong road, after all. But Lord Kirth's views go straight down the broad highway where all must follow, unless we want to stick in the

mire, get scratched in the brambles or tumbled in the ditches of the byroads.

As for me, I feel that my wings are clipped; my plumage is dusty on top, but it is some comfort that it is still white underneath, and that no matter what happens, I know *you* love and believe in

YOUR GRACE.

P.S.—Between Dover and London.

Louise! You don't know how you help me! I wrote my whole heart out to you in the above letter, and since then I have been thinking it over all the way across the Channel, and the last half hour in the train. Putting down my thoughts in black and white has cleared my mind. The truth is not very comforting, and it reads, not success, as I thought, but failure.

It is true that I have had my own way absolutely, but I have been chasing a will-o'-the-wisp over marsh lands. There is only one thing in life worth living for, and that is love; and now I know too late there is but one love in my life, and he is *Bobby!*

CHAPTER XVII.

THE OAKS, BERKSHIRE,

Sunday, August 16, —.

DEAREST LOUISE: It is good to be here! I love every stick and stone of this dear old place. It is a comfort to be where everyone speaks English, and where I don't have to think over each sentence twice to be sure it conveys only one meaning. England is not America, but the bond of one language is very great. And Maud! Was there ever a greater dear than she? You remember her, don't you? She goes through life in the same perfectly happy-go-lucky way, with a big heart and delightful unconsciousness of anyone or anything around her. Everyone has the same feeling of being at home in her house, of wanting to take off one's hat and stay. It is almost irresistible. Even the curate sat for two hours, and wrote out a sermon while he was paying a visit. Maud entirely forgot him, and he forgot he was not at home! She probably went on talking to the children,

or the dogs, who follow her about wherever she goes. Her children are perfectly sweet, unaffected, and beautifully brought up, although she talks about them, when they are present, as though they were chairs or tables. Her sentences run from one subject into another; she certainly never wears out any one theme.

"Tommy has grown a lot, hasn't he, Grace? His nose is undeveloped; I don't dare to think what kind it will be, but his teeth are nice. I wish it would rain, the roads are so dusty!"

She is the only woman I have ever seen who loves pretty clothes on other people, and never notices her own. She wears the most outrageous things all day. Any kind of a skirt with any kind of a waist will do, and the first hat she finds in the closet goes on her head. Her hair is never more than half curled. When one side is done, she decides she must go to the cellar or garret, or do anything but sit before her dressing table and be finished.

"Don't look at my hair to-day," she apologizes (it is *always* the same). "I could not wait to have it crimped this morning. You see, it was so thoughtless of the Lord not to finish me when I was made! It would only have taken Him as long as saying: 'Let this child's hair be curled,' whereas it takes Parker half an hour every day to curl it."

"When Parker is allowed to finish, you mean," I corrected. Maud smoothed the straight side, and readjusted a hairpin so that all the ends of her hair stuck out worse than ever, and then shrugged her shoulders, and laughed. But she has one vanity—her hands. And her nails are beautifully cared for. Also she has pretty feet; for an English woman, they are wonderful.

At night Parker has more control over her, as dinner impresses her as a thing that must be dressed for, and her evening gowns are pretty. She always wears beautiful lingerie, because her mother sends it to her from Paris, and it is no more trouble to put on pretty things than ugly ones.

Muriel Hartly is here, and, wonder

of wonders, the major is with her; but he leaves to-morrow, and Percy Gratton has already arrived. That is all, and I am glad. I don't feel a bit like a gay house party, as I am very down, and all the world seems empty and flat. I have an oppression as though my heart was wrapped in wet blankets.

To-day at tea time Maud said: "Bobby is coming some day this week; by the way, you came over on the steamer with him, didn't you? Don't you think he looks well? Two lumps and no cream, Muriel?"

Muriel nodded, and then said: "Bobby is engaged to Agnes Hamilton, isn't he?"

"I don't know," said Maud. "He has always been fond of her; it would be nice for both of them."

Every bit of color left my face, I think. For a moment everything stopped! I felt as though I were in a vacuum. I did not breathe; I think even my heart stopped beating, and then, suddenly, things rushed around me; I could not stand it, and saying that I was going for my handkerchief, went up to my room for a moment to argue it out with myself.

There was no sense in fainting or in acting like a fool, because I lost what I had not deserved to win. How can a woman who has been interested in half a dozen men, and in two particularly during the last three months, be such a pig as to think that she deserves the supreme reward of a love such as the greatest woman might be worthy of?

I wanted to singe my wings in the candle light. Is it not perfectly just, therefore, that the light of the sun is denied me? I cannot help feeling the fairness of it, and I am certainly not going to moan and wring my hands. But she is the luckiest woman in the world! I hope she appreciates it! Louise!—if I had not talked so much about freedom and independence—I wonder— He was probably thinking of Lady Agnes then. I *hate* her! No, I don't, if she is worthy of him and he is happy. But he is coming! What does he want to come and torment me for? I don't want to see him again! I think I will go back

and marry Sibvorsva—and try to make him happy, anyway.

TUESDAY MORNING.

Lord Bobby is coming to-day. I look like a sight! I am as white as a ghost and as thin as a rail. He will think me hideous—if he thinks at all. If all this nonsense I am going through is unrequited love, it is not as amusing as it sounds in the funny papers. I will never laugh at a moping lover again! But what am I going to do when I see him again, if I look and feel like this just thinking about it?

I can't eat, and I can't sleep for hours after I go to bed. In the morning, before I am actually awake, I am conscious of a vague, impending uneasiness, and I force myself into full consciousness, hoping to shake off the nightmare, and I wake instead into the day's horror. I have braced myself and argued with myself, until now I think I can stand having the nightmare come true.

He is going to say radiantly: "Congratulate me, Mrs. Trevis, my ideal is true." And then I am going to smile and say: "Of course I do—I am *so* glad!" I think I can do it—I don't feel anything anywhere now. You could stick pins in me as you would in a cushion, without my knowing it.

This is my worst day. To-morrow it will all be over! I will pinch my cheeks to get some color, and go down and meet him; I know that I am a fool, you need not tell me so; I have just enough of myself left to appreciate the humor of my own situation, and I am holding to my sense of the ridiculous as a drowning man grasps a straw.

Don't laugh at me, Louise! It sounds like sentimental drivel, but I am suffering!

GRACE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WEDNESDAY, August 19, —.

BROOK STREET, LONDON.

He loves me! Louise, *he loves me!* Do you hear? Or are you deaf and blind as these moving things around me called human beings? Why don't

the stages stop, and the bells ring out, and everyone shout? Don't they *know* Bobby loves me—*me*—I tell you! Why don't you say something? I want to go up on the housetops, and shout it out to the whole world! And everyone must take a holiday, a Fourth of July, and set off fireworks! The streets of London are just the same as every day. What is the matter with the people? Stupid, senseless, loveless idiots—poor things, what do they know of joy and happiness—or anything?

He loves *me*, not them, and not Lady Agnes; he never meant her at all! And I am up on a pedestal, high, and high, and crowned with stars—way up, nearly as high as Heaven—and Bobby!

Ah, Louise, dear, it is all so wonderful, I am too happy to have a grain of sense; I will try to tell you how it happened. If you can't make head or tail of it, it is because my mind has gone off on a holiday to play around the gates of Paradise, and won't come back and be sensible. I would be reasonable if I could; but how can I, with my mind where I can't reach it?

Let me see—I was miserable, so miserable I did not know anything; that was *long* ago; no, it was only yesterday! I went down to lunch, and Bobby was there. He came forward, and shook hands with me, and all the agony I have ever known was crowded into that moment.

Fortunately, Maud was talking, without waiting for anyone to get a word in crossways, so that I had a little time to get my nerves together. Lord Bobby sat next to me, but the conversation was general, and we said nothing to each other. I tried to eat my luncheon, but each morsel of food seemed a choking mouthful, and I mused things around on my plate with my fork to make believe I was eating.

Maud's voice was saying: "The peaches are delicious this year. Do have one, Grace. Don't you think every man should marry by the time he is thirty? Oh, I say, Bobby, are we to congratulate you?" (It was coming! To my surprise I felt quite like the pincushion.)

"No; not yet, I'm sorry to say," he answered, looking at me. Did he know it hurt? Well, he shouldn't! I went on cutting up a peach; my fingers were perfectly steady, as I asked him enthusiastically: "Have you really found your ideal, Lord Kirth?"

"I found her long ago," he said, to me alone. "I am only hoping that she will find me."

"She is sure to," I said, smiling, "and here are my best wishes, at any rate." And I raised my sherry glass toward him. It was true, then! Even on the steamer it had been of Lady Agnes that he was thinking. Oh, I thought, would luncheon never end? Maud and Percy Grafton talked and talked. I wanted to go away somewhere—*anywhere alone!*

As soon as we left the table I slipped off across the lawn toward the garden, but I had only gone a few yards when he, whom I was trying to escape, came running after me.

"Oh, I say, Mrs. Trevis, aren't you going to take me with you?" I had no excuse for refusing him, so he came along. I did so want to go off and be miserable! But we walked on down to the summerhouse that is built out over the water. I sat on the railing and he stood leaning against one of the columns. The river was deserted, and for some time we said nothing. He had an unusual gayety in his manner, and seemed very much preoccupied and pleased with his own thoughts. I supposed, following the custom of all lovers, that he wanted to talk about *her*! It was hard, but I had to prove that I had some pride left, even if my heart were broken.

Even Paddy was innocently adding an almost unbearable share to my misery. His company blandishments were laid aside as, standing with his front paws against my knees, he snuggled his tousled little head against my hands with unmistakable affection. I gradually steadied my fingers by stroking his

ears, while his tongue made the soft lapping sound of pure content.

Finally, I pushed him gently away, and said to Lord Bobby with all the naturalness I could assume:

"Out with it! Tell me all about her! Are you just as much in love as you thought you would be?"

"More!" he answered, looking away. "Much more!"

"Then you must be very happy," I said.

"No," he replied, dreamily, "because I am not sure *if she loves me.*" He turned toward me, and his eyes were deep and sweet, so sweet they gave me actual pain, and he went on slowly: "I hope she will, and I think she *will* some day! But she hates marriages, she loves to run all over the world alone, she needs the admiration of many; a man who is really in love is an egotist, and a bore——" He had gradually left his position by the column, as he was speaking, and was now standing very close to me. His eyes still looked down into mine, but their look was a caress.

"Isn't that the way she feels—my darling?"

Again for a moment I had that sensation of being in a vacuum—the next, I was in his arms!

"You know you hate husbands," he teased. "Are you sure you don't want to be free again?"

"I don't know how I can," I gasped. "But I don't want anything ever but *you*, Bobby—never, *never* let me go!"

"Sweetheart mine!" he said, and the world went out.

Kiss me, Louise, and give me your blessing. Ah, dear, I am almost afraid to be so happy—afraid the fates will find it out, and, knowing that such blessedness is too great for mortals, take it away. Or, that I shall wake up and find I am only a dream person, and not really, your radiant

GRACE.

The Rajah and Lady Alchester

By Katherine C. Thurston

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I.



It was the last important reception of an unusually brilliant season. In the great suite of reception rooms the older guests were enjoying themselves after their own fashion, but the younger portion of the crowd had instinctively drifted toward the terrace and the long gardens that distinguished Lennox Lodge from other town houses.

It was upon this terrace, with its interesting and constantly changing scene, that two men looked placidly down, as they smoked their cigars on the highest of the stone steps that led outward from the French windows of the card room. The elder of the two thus occupied was a short man with broad shoulders, sallow skin, and grizzled hair; the other a distinguished-looking personage with a pale face and a pointed beard. To the casual observer, there was nothing to indicate that the former came of an illustrious family, and in his day had been a successful viceroy of India, or that the latter was a millionaire of no particular origin, whose money had mysteriously sprung from salt. Nowadays, nature labels her products with a certain eye to humorous effect.

For a space both men smoked silently, amused by the procession that, with ever-varying flashes of color, moved by twos and threes into the stream of light thrown outward from the house, then passed on into the dimness of the gardens. Finally Luke Parry, the salt king and the younger of the two men, took his cigar from his mouth, and half

turned toward his companion. But before the remark he contemplated could be made, he paused again, attracted by a fresh couple who came slowly across the terrace from the shadows into the light. Simultaneously, Lord Gatehouse glanced in the same direction.

The two who attracted this attention would have commanded interest in any situation; in the light and shade of the broad terrace, they made a striking picture. The woman, one of the most attractive of the season's beauties, was the wife of Lord Alchester, the Secretary of State for India; her escort, the young Rajah of Rutpore, whose good looks, distinguished manners and magnificent retinue had been a subject of gossip for nearly eight weeks.

As the two passed the flight of stone steps, Lady Alchester glanced up, smiled and nodded to Lord Gatehouse. For an instant the glimmer of her gown, the flash of the rajah's jewels, the light and animation on both their faces was thrown into strong relief; then, as the previous couples had done, they passed on into the gardens.

The eyes of the two men followed them till they were out of sight; then once more Parry turned to his companion.

"What a remarkable example of civilization!" he said. "Clothe that young Eastern in conventional evening dress and you have the average English 'variety man.' These Asiatics are wonderfully adaptive."

There was a pause, then Lord Gatehouse laughed.

"I disagree with you there, Parry. I should say, take off the covering, the

husk, and find the Oriental. That is the mistake you people make. You cover the East with a thousand miles of telegraph wire or railway line, and you think to span a thousand years of tradition and instinct with the same ease and in the same space of time. That's where you make your mistake." He paused, while the music of a string band came softly from the interior of the house, and the guests passed and repassed below them.

"There is one subject, Parry," he went on again, "upon which I hold fixed beliefs. No intercourse, no similarity in education or in dress, can ever bridge the gulf between the European and the Asiatic. Take the Oriental at any age you like, teach him what you like, train him as you like—and what is the result? He is still the Oriental." His words came earnestly, even warmly; then all at once he ceased to speak, as a tall figure crossed the terrace from the gardens, and began to mount the steps.

"Ah, Alchester, indulging in solitary meditation?" he exclaimed in a different voice. "I should like a word with you later; I'm interested in that Agra affair."

Lord Alchester smiled. "Very good!" he said. "I shall look out for you." And nodding to the two men, he passed into the card room.

Parry looked after him.

"I can never understand Alchester's holding office," he said. "He seems too impassive, too cold and unobservant, for a public man."

Again Gatehouse smiled.

"There again, Parry," he said, "we hold different views. Twenty years ago I thought the same as you think now; but Alchester came with me to India as my secretary, and in three months' time I learned to form fresh opinions. The man who calls Alchester unobservant knows very little of Alchester." He paused, laughing thoughtfully, then resumed his smoke with a final air.

II.

Meanwhile the couple whose appearance had started Lord Gatehouse on his

pet subject of racial distinctions were pursuing their pleasure in a different direction.

Abdul Chandra Akbar was the forty-second Rajah of Rutpore, and his position among the protected princes of India was high. His father had been a man of progressive, though fiery, temperament, and the heir to his possessions had been given an English education of the first grade.

Young Akbar had passed through the probation of a public school and acquitted himself as an Oxford undergraduate with equal credit; at twenty-four he had returned to India, and a year later, on his father's death, he had found himself the ruler of his dominions. Now, after a five years' absence, he had reappeared in England in all the splendor of native dress and a native retinue.

Oriental potentates were not rare in London during that season. But the spectacle of a prince who not so long before had been the ordinary Europeanized Asiatic making a new entry into society with all the magnificence of another continent, and, according to rumor, at least one native wife, had a touch of piquancy; and the rajah's advent had caused a pleasant stir of interest and curiosity.

From the moment that he established himself in the quiet house off Park Lane that had been placed at his disposal, hostesses had striven for the honor of entertaining him; the smartest women in society had vied with each other to gain his favor; and when, in the first week of his stay, he had patronized a charity bazaar, and had spent a whole afternoon and a fabulous sum of money at Lady Alchester's flower stall, the vendor of the flowers had been tacitly admitted to have made the conquest of the season.

Violet Alchester was an exceptionally pretty woman. Two years earlier she had married Lord Alchester, taking him for better or worse, with that complete disregard of consequences that is usual in a girl of eighteen. In the first year of the marriage things had promised well. A certain pleasure in the dignity of her position, a certain diffident ad-

miration for the inscrutable husband who had chosen as his wife the third daughter of a penniless Irish peer, had colored Violet's life with the hue of romance; then gradually the magical hue had faded.

She was not without good feeling and fine impulse, but she was very young, very impressionable, very much in love with life; and when, at the end of the first twelve months Alchester's political party had come into power, and the attentive, considerate husband had been transformed into a statesman with every hour of his day fully occupied, the change had brought its own results. Violet was not sufficiently a child to find solace in her own make-believes, not sufficiently a woman to discriminate impartially between a man's duty and his love. She passed in silence through the three stages of her position—loneliness, pride and resentment; then she sought consolation in the social sea that has closed over so many grievances, real or imaginary. She took her place in the smartest set her world possessed.

In the year that had followed her launch upon society, her triumphs and conquests had made up a formidable list. A score of admirers and a consequent score of flirtations had followed one upon the other; that none of the affairs had merited a stronger name than flirtation had lain with Violet herself. More than once she had skated upon thin ice, but a combination of luck and instinctive principle had always brought her safely to the bank. It was at this precise stage of her social career that Abdul Chandra Akbar of Ruptore appeared upon the scene.

He saw her first at the great charity bazaar in May, and a fortnight later he was her recognized slave. What Lord Alchester thought of this open homage—whether it had even penetrated his understanding, fixed inscrutably upon more lofty things—was a subject speculated upon by many. At the end of the second month there were no eyes, except perhaps Violet's own, that did not study the face of the Secretary for India for some show of uneasiness or resentment against the young Oriental

who threatened to drift into his sphere of responsibility upon personal as well as political grounds. But those who studied Alchester saw no deeper into his mind than did the wife who ignored his existence. If he knew or suspected anything, he was diplomatist enough to give no outward sign.

So things stood at the moment when Violet looked up and smiled at Lord Gatehouse from the terrace of Lennox Lodge, and then moved onward toward the steps that led down into the dark gardens.

As the card room was left behind, she turned again to her companion.

"You know it's impossible," she said, softly. "You know that it's quite impossible." The words were decisive, but there was a touch of deprecation such as a woman uses when she plays with a temptation that she does not really fear.

When she ceased to speak the rajah glanced at her quickly, and a look of triumph crossed his face as he noted her flushed cheeks, her bright eyes, her half-parted lips.

"And yet," he insinuated, "it is such a little thing. The first favor I have asked of you—and the last." His tone dropped, the note of pathos that always underlies the Oriental voice deepening noticeably. Something of mystery and charm seemed to pervade his words. He pleaded, and yet held his dignity. Violet unconsciously compared him with the score of other admirers, and, without prejudice, the comparison tended in his favor.

Instinctively he felt her thought, and pressed the advantage home.

"You do not understand," he whispered, earnestly; "you do not know how my life has opened up in these past weeks, as the earth expands and blossoms in the sun. And after to-morrow I go away into the darkness." As they descended slowly from the terrace to the gardens, he put out his hand and touched her arm. In the intensity of his feeling his hand shook slightly. "I go back into my own country—back into the darkness," he repeated. "Is it strange that I plead for one hour—one memory?"

Influenced by the night, by the scent of the flowers, by the low, appealing voice, Violet did not withdraw her arm. In all her games of love, no man had played so perfectly, had acted his part so delightfully and sincerely. When her voice came again, its denial was still less emphatic.

"I do understand," she said, softly. "But to see you alone—to go to your house— Oh, you know it's impossible!" She laughed a little uncertainly.

The rajah had taken a step nearer.

"Why?" he insisted, in his appealing voice. "Why? You English women risk as much every day. Surely it is not the deed but the man that demands the confidence. You know me. You trust me. Why should you fear?"

Violet raised her head quickly.

"Oh, you misunderstand!" she said. "It isn't that I distrust you; of course I trust you, but—" She paused and laughed again. "It's your house—the going to your house. If I were to go, and to be seen—"

On the last word her voice died to a whisper as a figure, vaguely outlined in the darkness, emerged from a pathway and, walking slowly past them, ascended to the terrace.

Violet glanced at the retreating figure, but in the thick dusk it was unrecognizable. With a quick movement, she turned to her companion. "Let's walk on!" she exclaimed. "I want to explain—I want to make you understand."

In silence the rajah obeyed. Taking advantage of the darkness, he walked close beside her, guiding her carefully along the almost invisible paths. At last, catching the gleam of a stone seat among a clump of trees, he drew her toward it.

Violet seated herself, but he remained standing. After a moment's pause, he stooped down and began to speak rapidly as though to dispute her arguments before they were made.

"In England," he began, "if a man is condemned to die, you usually give him whatever he asks for as a last boon. After to-morrow I am to die—because love is life, and I must part with love. Will the most beautiful woman in Eng-

land be less merciful than the laws of her country?"

Violet made no reply. There was a touch of the picturesque in the knowledge that the invisible face bent ardently down toward hers, the low, expressive voice pleading so eloquently, were the adjuncts of an Eastern prince—such a prince as she had given to her fairy princesses when, as a child, she had woven stories and gazed out across the limitless sea from the old castle on the Irish coast.

The thought stirred her—stirred her vanity, her youth, her sense of adventure. For the first time the idea of yielding to his request came to her, causing her heart to beat quicker and her cheeks to flame. What if she did secretly outrage the conventionalities? She knew that she could guard against discovery; she knew that she could trust her host. She raised her head and looked upward through the darkness.

"Why do you want it?" she asked. "Wouldn't a good-by anywhere else do as well?" Her tone was low and wavering.

With a sudden impulse, the rajah took a step forward. The next moment she was conscious that he was kneeling beside her on the smooth, close-cut grass.

In a European the position would have been absurd; in the Oriental, with his splendid dress, his priceless jewels, his innate suggestion of romance, it was delightful. Violet waited breathlessly.

"Why do I wish to see you in my house?" he exclaimed. "Only because it is my house; because, temporary as it may be, it possesses my natural surroundings. It suggests the country to which I belong. Is it strange that I should wish to see the woman I honor in those surroundings, if only once—if only for one hour?" He paused and caught her hand, waiting for her reply.

Violet was silent; then she laughed with a touch of excitement.

"If I were to go," she began, hesitatingly, "it would only be as a friend—to say good-by as a friend. You understand that?"

The rajah made no answer; but, lift-

ing her hand, he kissed it suddenly and passionately.

With a quick movement, she rose to her feet.

"And if I went," she added, hastily, "it would be only for ten minutes—only long enough to say good-by."

Intuitively quick to read her feelings, he saw her momentary wish to retract—the momentary doubt that his ardor had roused. With an admirable display of self-control, he released her hand, slowly rose from his knees, and stood before her in disarming humility.

"If it were only for one minute," he said, softly, "I should be grateful all my life."

III.

The darkness and warmth that had prevailed on the night of the reception found a violent culmination on the following day. A close and gloomy morning was succeeded by a thunderstorm of unusual vehemence, which, in its turn, was followed by a deluge of rain.

The downpour was flooding the streets and successfully clearing them of pedestrians, when at five o'clock Violet Alchester drove from her own home to the house off Park Lane where the rajah had set up his household gods.

Something of last night's excitement was still observable in her face; and when, from time to time, she glanced with pardonable vanity into one of the small side mirrors, the reflection that confronted her was sufficiently attractive to satisfy even her own critical eyes.

From the moment when she had parted with the rajah the night before and had driven away from Lennox Lodge, the intoxication of the prospective adventure had filled her mind. Alchester had been very silent during that drive home, but he had helped her from the carriage with even more than his usual care; and later, as they parted for the night, he had held her hand with a pressure that was unusually long and close. But both these incidents had slipped Violet's observation. The rajah's jewels; the rajah's irresistible voice, the rajah's Oriental charm, had caught her

imagination. By the time her maid appeared at nine o'clock the following morning with her usual cup of chocolate, she had almost dreamed herself into the belief that the flirtation of the last two months was nothing less than a genuine romance.

The same thought was spinning through her mind as the cab, having wheeled from Piccadilly into Park Lane, turned swiftly to the right and drew up before a somber-looking house.

In a scattered shower of raindrops the cab window was raised, and Violet, with a quickly-beating heart, rose from her seat and gathered her skirts together; an instant later, she had opened her umbrella and stepped to the ground. It took but one furtive glance to show her that the long, gray street was deserted—providentially cleared of foot passengers by the rain that still fell in torrents; the next, she was aware, with an inexpressible sense of relief, that the door of the rajah's house had opened, giving a glimpse of a dim interior and a tall, dignified figure who awaited her entrance in an attitude of profound respect. At the sight her sense of adventure rose paramount once more, blotting out the momentary fear of discovery; and, hurriedly crossing the footpath, she passed into the thickly carpeted hall.

With a thud the door closed behind her, and the tall, silent servant who had admitted her moved down the hall, indicating that she was to follow.

In a peculiar frame of mind—a mingling of excitement, anticipation and uncertainty—she obeyed. The hall was long, wide, and insufficiently lighted; no sound penetrated through the heavily draped walls, and the feet fell noiselessly upon the splendid Eastern carpet that covered the floor. London with its traffic, its bustle, its life, lay outside; within was peace—an extraordinary, an almost disconcerting peace.

Still animated by her conflicting impressions, Violet followed her guide. Try as she might to realize the position, a sense of the unexpected oppressed her. She had looked to find her host's surroundings a bizarre and interesting rep-

resentation of Oriental life; and it was with something of a shock that she perceived them to be no faithful, theatrical reproduction, but a phase of the life itself. Even as the knowledge came to her, two female figures, gracefully draped and with veiled faces, glided silently forward from an inner hall, and, with quick and furtive glances of curiosity, disappeared through a doorway on the left.

The incident was small, and possibly meaningless; but an uncomfortable, unaccountable sensation passed through her. With an impulse not easily to be explained, she hastened her steps and overtook her guide.

Reaching his side, she half extended her hand, and her lips parted. But whatever her impulse had been, it was destined to find no expression. Without seeing her gesture, the man halted before an arched entrance, drew back the curtain that hung before it, and, with a profoundly grave bow, stood aside to let her pass.

For one second Violet hesitated; then, with a quick contempt for her passing apprehension, she walked rapidly forward. An instant later her assurance returned at sight of her host.

As she entered the room the rajah was seated, Indian fashion, upon a heap of cushions placed on the floor; but instantly he saw her he rose with the easy courtesy for which he was distinguished, and came quickly forward.

Reaching her side, he caught both her hands, raised them to his lips, and kissed them.

The salutation was not quite what Violet had expected. She hesitated for a moment, then freed her hands with a laugh.

"I have come, after all!" she said, lightly. "I have come for the ten minutes. But what a wonderful room!" To hide her momentary sense of awkwardness, she glanced round the room, which gold-embroidered drapery and jeweled screens had converted into an almost regal apartment.

"How was it done?" she asked, studying the walls. "It's almost as splendid as its owner."

At the words a quick smile touched the rajah's lips.

"It is nothing," he said, softly. "This is only the reflection; the reality is many miles away." The light in his eyes deepened.

Conscious of his scrutiny, Violet laughed once more.

"You mean India?" she said.

He silently acquiesced.

"India must be very gorgeous," she said. She felt slightly and unaccountably nervous—an embarrassed nervousness that had never previously assailed her.

"Some day I must make Alchester take me there," she added. "If I succeed, will you be hospitable? Will you entertain us? I could not return without seeing an Indian court." In the new embarrassment, her tone was flip-pant.

For a moment the rajah's face darkened, but he mastered his emotion. Taking a step forward, he looked even more searchingly into her eyes.

"You have thought that?" he asked, quickly. "You have thought that you would like to see India?"

She glanced up, then took a step backward. The affair was taking a tone she had not expected, and did not like. There was a note in the rajah's voice, a look in his eyes, that society had not injured her to. A new and definite uneasiness crossed her mind.

"You have wanted to see India?" he said again.

Once more she sought shelter in flip-pancy.

"Oh, I don't know!" she exclaimed. "One wants such a lot of things."

But her sentence was abruptly broken. With a violent and passionate gesture—such a gesture as no other man had dared to use toward her—the rajah caught her suddenly in his arms and kissed her.

A chill of fear, then a hot wave of rage, before which the fear melted, passed through Violet. With a swift movement, she wrenched herself free, and, stepping backward, confronted her host with a face as pale, eyes as brilliant, as his own.

For a moment her voice failed her; then, with an effort, she summoned and controlled it.

"I want you to call your servant," she said, slowly. "I—I wish to be shown out of the house."

In her pride and indignation she possessed a new charm. As he watched her, the rajah's lips tightened.

"I wish to be shown out of the house," she repeated. Her words came a shade quicker; her tone was a shade less steady.

He still surveyed her immutably.

Then again the first feeling, the feeling of fear, caught her. With a sudden impulse, she moved across the room to where a gong stood beside an empty coffee cup on a little inlaid table.

But the rajah, intently watchful of every expression and every gesture, forestalled her. Laying his hand over the gong, he looked up at her.

"It is quite useless," he said, in his low, musical voice. "You might ring all day long—but no one would answer."

In the first second of startled disbelief, a laugh rose to Violet's lips; but involuntarily it melted away without expression. There was something in his deliberate pronunciation, something in the intensity of his gaze, that effectually checked it. A sickening chill of apprehension—a sensation never before experienced in her frivolous, sheltered life—struck through her.

"I suppose this is meant to—to amuse me," she said; "but I—hardly understand it. It's impossible for me to stay any longer. If I cannot have a servant to show me out, I must go by myself." With a creditable attempt at dignity, she turned and walked across the room. Her heart was beating fast, her limbs felt weak and unsteady, but she held her head very high.

As she reached the curtain that hung across the doorway, the rajah sprang forward.

"No!" he cried, barring the way. "No! You cannot go!"

"Cannot?" In defiance of all pride, all resolution, her lips paled.

"Cannot!" he repeated, in a quick, excited voice. "Oh, don't you know?

Don't you know and understand?" he exclaimed. "I have admired you, and wanted you from the moment we first met. My feelings are not an Englishman's feelings—cold, calculating, conventional. I love you! I love you! Can any words convey more—any words imply more? A thousand years ago a man won his bride by right of strength; to-day he wins her by right of love. You believed I would be content with a farewell!" He laughed. "I come of a different race from your Englishman who dallies a week or two—a month or two—a year or two, and then goes out of your life with a casual good-by. When I asked you to come here I contemplated no good-by—unless it was a long good-by to all your past. You have wished to see India. You shall see India."

He stepped toward her; but as he advanced she retreated. At last she stopped.

"Let me pass," she said. "I wish to pass." Her voice shook palpably.

The rajah smiled. "In love, as in other things," he said, "the woman has no real will. It is the man who desires—conquers—achieves." He came a step nearer.

With a little gasp, Violet put out her hands. "Don't!" she said. "Don't! I shall call for help!"

He laughed.

"Call, if it pleases you," he said. "But there is not a European within hearing. We understand the value of silence and discretion in the East."

Then, and only then, did Violet fully comprehend her position. She had thought to add the rajah to the list of her victims, as she might add a trinket to her jewel box. She had led the victim to the altar; but there, at the moment of sacrifice, he had, against all precedent, suddenly possessed himself of the knife. She looked at the face before her—at the curving lips, the straight, dark eyebrows, the somber, expressive eyes; she thought of the silent house with its noiseless, mysterious inmates, and something like panic seized her.

"Let me pass!" she exclaimed. "Let

me go! You cannot keep me here—you cannot—you cannot! With a woman who loved you, it might be different; but with a woman who hates you, loathes you, despises you——”

But she got no further; for, in that crucial moment, the rajah unconsciously proved the theory of Lord Gatchouse as to the gulf that separates East and West.

With a swift movement, he reached her side.

“It matters nothing to me,” he said, passionately, “whether you love me or hate me. It is not your mind or your opinion that I covet, but your beautiful face—your beautiful self.” With a fierce gesture, he caught her again in his arms.

For one frightened second, Violet was conscious of his tightened clasp, of his lips upon her cheek; then, with a dazed sense of bewilderment, she felt his face lift and his arms slacken. With a sudden intuition, she raised her head and looked towards the curtained doorway.

The curtain was drawn back, and the servant who had admitted her was standing in the aperture. His manner was deprecating and obsequious; he looked supplicatingly towards the rajah, then broke into a string of unintelligible words.

The effect of the words was strong. The rajah's face darkened, and his eyes blazed. A fierce exclamation escaped him; he took a step forward, then, with equal suddenness, he drew back.

With an assured step and a perfectly easy manner, a tall man in conventional English dress appeared behind the servant, and, walking past him, entered the room.

There was not a trace of surprise or perturbation on Lord Alchester's face as he came slowly forward. His first glance was for the rajah.

“Forgive my want of ceremony!” he said, suavely; “but we are all compelled to be unconventional at times. Your people were very discreet—uncomfortably discreet; so I took the matter into my own hands. It took me a long time to convince them that I bear a personal message from the king—that I have the right to an immediate audience.” He

laughed; then, for the first time, he appeared to see his wife.

“What!” he said. “Violet!” He glanced from one to the other, then smiled.

“Ah! I fancy I understand!” he said. “The rajah found you storm-bound, and offered you hospitality. You Easterners give us a lesson in the older virtues!” He turned again to his host.

Of the two so strangely surprised, the rajah was the first to recover his equanimity. The somber light still burned in his eyes, his olive skin still possessed a greenish pallor; but his manner was controlled as he came slowly forward towards his unwelcome visitor.

“Anything done for Lady Alchester is its own reward,” he said, with studied deference. “As for the king's message, I cannot say more than that I am honored in the message—and the messenger.”

Again Alchester laughed. There was something dignified, high, and yet very unostentatious, in his manner—something that suggested the leniency of the man who deals with forces infinitely lesser than himself.

“The message is brief,” he said; “but, as I have explained, it requires a private audience. If my wife has no objection, I shall put her into my cab, and then return. The storm is quite over,” he added to Violet, in a gentler voice.

For answer, she stepped impulsively towards him.

There was a moment's pause; then, very slowly, the rajah crossed the room and, drawing back the curtain, made a passage for his guests. If there was any expression in his face as Violet passed him, the profound deference of his bow successfully shielded it.

No word was exchanged between husband and wife as they passed through the draped and carpeted hall and out into the street. To Violet there was something wonderfully wholesome, clean and familiar in the long sweep of rain-washed pavement, in the commonplace figures that threaded the quickly-drying footpaths. Involuntarily she stepped closer to Alchester.

With extreme care and gentleness, he helped her into the waiting cab; then he stood for a moment with his hand resting on the doors.

"Will you wait for me, Violet?" he said. "Or would you prefer to drive home alone?"

There was a pause. Violet glanced at her husband, then glanced ahead at the long, gray street; then quickly and timidly she extended her fingers and touched his hand.

The action was spontaneous. It worked as no studied effect could possibly have done. With an eager movement, Alchester raised his head.

"Violet," he said, quickly, "were you sorry to see me? Be quite honest."

At the unexpected words, the unexpected tone, Violet's emotions welled over. Her eyes suddenly filled with tears.

"Oh," she said, "if you only knew what seeing you meant! How—how extraordinary it was that you should have come!"

For a space he remained silent; then at last he spoke, looking directly into her eyes.

"It wasn't at all extraordinary, little girl," he said. "It was intentional from the first."

"Intentional?" she repeated, slowly. "Intentional?"

Alchester bent his head.

"I haven't been blind all along, Violet," he said, quietly. "I have only been waiting until some day you should need me—need me, and turn to me of your own accord. When this Oriental came upon the scene I knew the day wasn't far off; last night when I passed you in the gardens and caught a sentence in your voice, I knew it had come." He spoke very low, but he spoke with masterful self-possession.

Violet was silently conscious that she saw him truly for the first time.

"And the king's message?" she said at length.

At the words Alchester glanced down at her gloved hand; then he looked up again, with an inscrutable expression at the corners of his mouth.

"Ah," he said, with a gleam of humor, "there you touch dangerous ground. It's never safe to press a minister on an official point."



ALONE

THERE should be two words, dearest, one made up
Of all glad sounds that ever breathed on earth;
Of all the ecstasies that fill joy's cup,
Of love, and peace, and happiness, and mirth.

The other, like a weary, wailing sigh,
Full of sad tones in longing, hungry strain,
Hopeless, despairing, just a baffled cry
Of love and loneliness and blank, numb pain.

One I would love,—the other I would fear,
These two words, chosen with consummate art;
One meaning we're *alone* together, dear,
The other meaning, we're *alone*,—apart.

CAROLYN WELLS.

THE SOCIAL SIDE OF ST. LOUIS*

IN WHICH A LEADER OF SOCIETY
TELLS THE TRUTH ABOUT IT



WHEN Mr. Lincoln Steffens wrote of "The Shamelessness of St. Louis," he did not have in mind the city's lack of shame for not possessing a Four Hundred of the New York sort; and yet it may be said, with emphatic truthfulness, that we of the great mid-western capital are quite unashamed in respect to this situation.

Pre-eminently, superlatively, savagely, St. Louis is a big city of business. Nevertheless, there is nothing sordid about this business; on the contrary, it is delightfully relieved by a sense of necessity, and men go about it in that cheerful spirit which necessity engenders.

In this city we work hard, gathering money by every wile that's justified by honor, and, perhaps, in some cases by other wiles; but it is not for miserliness, nor for magnificence:

"Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Not for a train attendant,
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent."

Perhaps the average St. Louisan could not name the author of the lines quoted. Business is to blame for this, if it be true. Quite recently I overheard a query and a response—the query by an outsider, and the response by a St. Louisan—which went to the proving of this alleged condition. The two men were passing up the central walk of Administration Plaza, in the World's Fair

grounds, when the stranger pointed out a long, low building at the right. The structure, guiltless of architectural embellishment, presented, in its scarcely completed state, an exterior of grayish plaster.

"What building is that?" inquired the stranger.

"Oh, that's just a representation of a doby house in the Southwest," replied the St. Louis business man.

It so happens that the structure mistaken for an adobe reproduction is the Buras cottage, faithfully and fondly fashioned after the beloved original by devotees of the Scotch bard throughout America. The St. Louis man, not being a member of the Robert Burns Cottage Association, may be pardoned for mistaking the building's identity, inasmuch as it presented no placard of identification; and I, for one, am quite willing to grant him this pardon, in return for having supplied me, unwittingly, with an apt illustration of the fact that St. Louisans are not of the tribe of letters.

It has been said, with what degree of truth I know not, that St. Louis is one of the most unreading cities in the United States. The Six Best-Selling Books of the Season, we are told by our booksellers, do not rely upon the trade reports from St. Louis to keep up their general average until such time as they fall by their own heaviness into the pit of past greatness.

St. Louis has two weekly periodicals of a character more or less literary. The

* This is the third in a series of important articles on social life in American cities to be published in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE throughout the present year. Articles on the social side of New York and Boston have appeared respectively in the June and July numbers. Articles of a similar nature will be published on Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco and New Orleans.—THE EDITORS.

editor of the older weekly declares that his circulation is greater, per square mile, in the cities of Kansas than in St. Louis; while the publisher of the newer periodical says that, while he has received thousands of subscriptions through personal solicitation and "schemes" in St. Louis, his list of voluntary city subscribers is very much lighter, per square mile of population, than the country town list.

These observations are not made with a view to indicating that we St. Louisans are ignorant, for that is not true; as a class, we are keen-minded, ready, alert, but we have not risen as yet out of the bogs of business into the serene atmosphere of artistic elegance. Tersely speaking, we have not arrived; we are still in the chrysalis, the silk sleeps in the cocoon, the butterfly will take wing and fly high to-morrow—wherefore St. Louis society lacks its Four Hundred, and is unashamed.

St. Louis takes pride in this utter shamelessness. Business, not books, is its parlor-wall motto to-day; success, not society, is its slogan; independence, not elegance, is its war cry. Business, success, independence—with this triumvirate, the one linked and leading to the other, St. Louis goes forward without social furor, willing to wait for its days of butterfly dazzlement. That such days will come, that they are inevitable, and that they even now are visible at the horizon line, cannot be gainsaid; but it is safe to predict that the debutantes of this season will be buxom matrons long before St. Louis achieves sufficient independence to enable any considerable class of its citizens to segregate themselves from the general run of human truck, and turn over and set up for life as a distinct upper crust, with a membership limit confined to three figures.

It is not to be denied that there are persons in St. Louis who deem themselves apart from the people, and capable of serving as the nucleus of a leisure class of limited numbers. These persons are heirs to extensive estates left by parents or other relatives who, during many years, rubbed their noses against

the gritty grindstone of business in the great workshop of the city's daily life. Even one of these, in comparatively recent times, has returned to the bogs of business after a dizzy whirl in the serener social atmosphere. This gentleman, of a family that grew opulent in business, began his career as a millionaire at maturity; he went to the Atlantic Coast and purchased a palatial yacht, and for one entire season and the initial third part of another he cruised about the New England resorts. When he suddenly sold his yacht, returned to St. Louis, and went into the real estate line, his friends were amazed beyond expression.

"What are you working for?" they demanded.

"What are you working for?" he retorted.

"Because we have to," they replied; "we are not millionaires."

"That is the very reason I am working," said the ex-yachtsman—"because I have to. It's in my bones, bred in; my father before me worked, and I must work, because I have grown up in St. Louis and can't lead the butterfly life."

St. Louis has no cultivated leisure class, in the sense that Boston and New York have it, and we feel no shame because of its lack.

But it must not be taken for granted that, because of our devotion to business, we have no social ideals or aspirations. This big town aspires mightily, and in the gradual working up to the realization of its ideals it is measurably active in social festivities. We have "functions" in St. Louis—fashionable functions, too—and affairs of elegance are as frequent here as in any American city except New York. St. Louis has no Fifth Avenue, but it has a West End. In the West End dwell the men who pull their captive legs out of the bogs of business upon occasion, and go home to participate in the functions which are arranged by the ladies of their households. Receptions, pink teas, card parties and the like, are given with the gusto of gorgeous appointments and the relish of appetites whetted to a razor edge upon the grindstone of business.

In this World's Fair season, the society ladies of St. Louis are highly gratified to be told by social stars from the East that the St. Louis function is no whit less elaborate than the New York brand. For be it known that this Missouri metropolis, having worked assiduously these many years and hoarded its earnings, is a city of rich men, who can afford now and then to spend money like water for wine and song and womanly radiance of evening gown and jewels. It is gratifying even to the humbler St. Louisan, who wots not of the doings on Lindell Boulevard, in Vandeventer Place and "the Cabanne District," to know that their own home town is able to dazzle, and does dazzle, the society swells of the East when this sort of dazzlement is due.

St. Louis has progressed far in the social sense during the past decade. Always there have been scores of homes here in which were found the most artistic furnishings, embellished more or less with art trophies garnered from the treasure houses of Europe. But it is only within the past half-dozen years or so that certain smart-set functions entitled to bear the placard "Imported from New York" have come into our Missouri metropolis and found welcome.

A few years ago a certain St. Louisan of distinguished name and connection went to New York, and married one of the fairest daughters of Gotham. The bride brought hither with her not only a most elaborate trousseau and a stock of diamonds calculated to dull the luster of the Victoria Jubilee presents, but she brought the "breakfast." Up to that time, St. Louis society had not breakfasted; true, we had had our coffee and rolls, our omelet and our beefsteak or chop, at the seven o'clock eating hour for a business population; but, with the advent of the handsome young matron from New York, the Breakfast was introduced to local society. This function, of course, begins at twelve o'clock noon, exactly. Before it came, the only high noon function was the fashionable wedding. But to be invited to a breakfast in St. Louis means more nowadays than

it meant formerly to receive an invitation to a dinner.

In this connection, an amusing little tale is told. There was a lady of most excellent pith, socially and mentally, who was invited to a breakfast. This lady had lived in St. Louis all her life, and belonged to one of those good, old-fashioned families, still very numerous in Western places, that call the noon meal dinner and the evening meal supper. When the breakfast invitation came, she was nonplused:

"I never was asked to a breakfast in my life," she confided to her most intimate friend. "What can the dear woman mean? What time does she have breakfast? Shall I have to get up early?"

"A breakfast, my dear," replied the friend, who had learned, "is given at twelve."

"Why, that's dinner time!" exclaimed the other.

But St. Louis already has learned to call the evening meal dinner, and, for the most part, has learned to add the "eon" to the lunch, which serves as a sop or salad to social etiquette.

St. Louis is dotted and spotted with "sets." There are half a dozen social sets, each of which strives strenuously for the supremacy; and beneath this heaving upper crust of society we have many underlying sets, down to the gaudily bebadged picnic association of the Fourth Ward.

There is, on the foam crest, the Old French Family set. This element is mighty in St. Louis. The city is named for a Frenchman; it was settled by the French; and, though Bonaparte parted with the trading post and its environs for a few farthings a hundred and one years ago, the French still govern St. Louis in a certain sense. As a matter of course, all these French people are thoroughly American and decidedly Missourian; but their Gallic names survive and are potential in social life. These names have been given to the streets, to the sections, such as Cabanne and Carondelet, and—to the cemeteries.

The possession of the name and blood of one of the old French families is a

sufficient passport into the most nearly exclusive social set in St. Louis. Riches are not required—merely blood. If So-and-So is descended from monsieur or madame, he or she is eligible. The old French blood is such a potential factor that a marriage with one through whose veins it runs is an introduction into the set, though the marrying outsider have no antecedent claim upon such recognition. Blood in St. Louis—if it be French, however thinly diluted—is thicker than water.

So potent is the Old French Family that one finds that those who live in the West End "district" named for one of these families carry the passport. Thus it comes about that the O. F. F., which is the F. F. V. of St. Louis, is not strictly exclusive. If you live in "Cabanne" and possess the fairly moderate means required, and the fairly respectable character insisted upon, you can get into that set.

There is another set, farther down toward the river, which is even more nearly exclusive. This is made up of the residents of Vandeventer Place and their connections who live outside; for the Place is filled with handsome homes and spacious grounds, and the houses are limited in number, the reservation being comparatively small. There are those living much farther west in St. Louis who hold that their home surroundings are far more desirable than the Vandeventer Place people possess. Vandeventer, they say, is too close to the coal soot and the smoke that made St. Louis infamous and caused the appointment of an official smoke inspector, who has inspected the smoke, pronounced it bad, and abated the most of it. It is quite true that the houses to the westward are more modern, but the stately elegance of the Vandeventers is a thing to be reckoned with in taking account of social supremacies in St. Louis.

St. Louis is a city of "Places." Residential sections with reservations and restrictions are said to be more numerous and more elegant in this city than in any other American town. Vandeventer Place has just been mentioned,

but one should not attempt to write anything about St. Louis society without paying some attention to Portland Place, Westmoreland Place, and other sections so designated. These "Places" are in the West End, far from the city's grime, where the dainty ladies may permit their skirts to trail with impunity and may go out of doors without rendering themselves liable to an attack of coughing from the coal soot that infests regions farther to the eastward in St. Louis.

Easy elegance without garish display is indicated by the exteriors of these "Place" residences; while within, should you win the open sesame of entrance, you will discover that not all the culture of the United States is confined to Boston, nor all the art collections limited to New York. We have here a number of residences adorned with some of the choicest prizes from European salons as to paintings, while in tapestries and general bric-a-brac there are furnishings in some of these houses which an Eastern multi-millionaire, himself a noted connoisseur, has made special request to be permitted to see.

The families of the men who have achieved such homes, such treasures and such capability of ease, are not particularly ashamed of the fact that their wealth may have been won in the manufacture of soap, breakfast cereal, coffins or shoes. On the contrary, they are rather proud of it.

In South St. Louis there is a distinct social set. Some of the envious West Enders call this the "brewery set," because of the preponderance of the millions made in the beer-brewing line of business.

"It is so mixed that you can't tell hops from bonds," said a bright West End lady, in discussing the South St. Louis element. By this she meant that the non-brewery factor is important, there being many excellent persons in this particular set who have made their money in other lines of industry. South St. Louis is largely German-American, and the social element there is to be classed high in the general summing up. It was from South St. Louis that the German brain and brawn went into the

volunteer army during the Civil War, saving Missouri to the Union at a critical period, when secession was rampant on the tongues of a majority of the purely American people. Our German-American residents who possess the means to uphold social careers—and they are many—might mix with the other city sets without clashing, if they desired; but, as a rule, they prefer to keep somewhat aloof.

St. Louis is a clubwoman's town in a pre-eminent sense. There are numerous clubs—social, musical, intellectual. Perhaps the preponderant potentiality in female clubdom is the Wednesday Club, comprising in its membership ladies from all of the social sets and from the unorganized outside.

"What is the chief aim of the Wednesday Club?" asked a visiting *attaché* of a foreign delegation to the World's Fair.

"The suppression of men," replied a lady who used to belong.

But in the inner circles of the Wednesday, it is known that these ladies talk Browning, Delsarte, pink teas, golf and—breakfasts. It is a club of culture and progress.

St. Louis society of late years has taken to summer resorting. Until a score of years ago, the family usually remained at home all summer—on account of business, largely. Now there has grown up a summer time leisure class. But St. Louis does not seek to mingle with the mighty at Newport or Bar Harbor. The tastes of these Missourians are more quiet—Jamestown is their great summer stopping place. There is a St. Louis summer colony at Jamestown which gives that burg a distinctly St. Louisian flavor. Part of social St. Louis goes to the Michigan lake resorts for the season. In the northern pineries are built several colonies of St. Louis cottages, where the families lead a restful life during the heated time, while *paterfamilias* remains at home attending to business, running up to stay over Sunday, or, perhaps, to spend three days in the vicinity of the Fourth of July.

Not long ago a St. Louis man bought

a house at Newport. He sold it after a part of one season's residence there.

"Why did you sell?" inquired a friend, who had been a member of the New York Stock Exchange, and had regretted it.

"Why did you leave 'Change?" was the answer. "You were from the West, and you were lonesome. Those New Yorkers were not of your kind. I was lonesome at Newport for the same reason. I might have stayed there in respectable isolation, but, being a Westerner, I love company."

This incident serves to indicate the democratic tendencies of St. Louis society. Of course, there are persons whose noses are tip-tilted when they pass average human animals on the streets; but, happily, that ilk is very small in number. For the most part, the St. Louis society folk are approachable; they do not require a conflagration to thaw their dignity before warming up to an interesting person who is outside the breastworks.

A poor girl, if she possess measurable culture, needs but an introduction through the proper channels to be placed on the invitation list of the Cabanne set; while a person of known bad character cannot buy his way into the inner circle.

The social side of St. Louis this year is more brilliantly in the limelight than is the case ordinarily, because of the World's Fair. Our city is hostess to the world. The guests are gathered from the foremost capitals of America, Europe and Asia. It is not unsafe to say that they find the social side of St. Louis neither concave nor convex, but sufficiently smooth to mirror without absurdity or grotesqueness the many phases of entertainment which society demands of all its devotees.

It is whispered, by the way, that since the opening of the World's Fair the local invitation list in certain quarters has been reorganized, and that now there are three classes of eligibles—A, B and C. For functions of a state character, such as the entertaining of Prince Pu Lun or Miss Roosevelt, Class A is listed. For an affair such as a reception

in honor of a foreign commissioner, Class B suffices. Class C is invited, along with the others, to ordinary things like punch-bowl parties. How true this triple-letter reorganization story is, I am not prepared to say; but it is obvious to anyone on the spot that the Exposition has introduced into St. Louis social life an element of arrogance that is distinctly painful to many of our old-time aristocrats.

However, this condition is but temporary. "The captains and the kings depart," and after the furore of the present season we doubt not that St. Louis will quiet down into its customary routine of social life—just a semi-Southern, semi-Western, wholly hospitable community, which still loves money because of the fun of making it, and not because grandfather handed it down.



ROSE TO ROSE

WILD rose, growing by the sea,
Sweet the dream you bring to me.

From this moor my fancy goes
To a garden and a Rose—

Not a wild one quite, like you,
But as pink and pretty, too,

As you are this golden day—
Miles and miles and miles away!

So I take you for your grace
Out of this deserted place,

And shall send you unto Her
For a fragrant comforter.

You shall no more dwell alone,
But at last come to your own;

Wild no longer, but as tame
As that other with your name.

It shall be your final bliss
Once to taste a rose's kiss;

Would that I with you might go,
Wild rose, and be welcomed so!

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.

THE AUGUST MOON

By S. Carleton

Author of "The Inn of the Long Year," "The Micmac," Etc.



UPDYKE!" Horrified surprise jerked Mr. Alston up from his couch of pink linnea and the lemon-scented cups of a flower without a name. "Updyke!" It was because words failed him that he waved a fishy hand from his only companion to something that had flitted down the pathway from the clubhouse in sufficiently plain view to be obnoxious.

"Well?" said Updyke; he kept on sorting a tangled mass of precious, and homemade, flies. There might have been more in his face than preoccupation, if Alston had been looking at it.

"There's a girl gone by—a girl!" And he might have said a hyena; either would have been as welcome down at the Gun Club.

It was an organization about as easy to get into as the city of Lhasa. The entrance fee was prohibitory; the subscription worse; the rules and regulations which fenced it in as the laws of the Medes and Persians—and here was one of the most stringent of them being violated before the outraged eyes of an original member. It seemed to Alston that someone had been playing a low-down game on him during a year's absence abroad, and he said so.

"Oh, that!" returned Updyke, slightly; his best line was to be casual; Alston must have seen her sooner or later. "You voted for it——"

"I suppose you mean my proxy did," sharply. "I was a fool ever to trust you with it, if you mean you've let ladies into the club. Lord! I thought there

was one place in the world far enough off, and lonely enough, to be rid of women!" He cast his eye grimly over as much as was visible of the forty thousand acres of woods that were Gun Club property, and was more grimly silent. If they had gone and let women in while he was away, what was the use of having no post and no telegraph, or what good would remain in a clubhouse where you had to dress for dinner?

"Are there any more of them?" he inquired, sourly. "And who's this one? I suppose they come to meals!"

"This one doesn't; and the rules haven't been altered." Updyke cast a belated glance at the perturbed face opposite; he would have been more comfortable if he had known how much or how little Alston had seen of that passing figure. "She's Sugden's daughter."

"What!"

Abroad or no abroad, Alston knew all about Sugden. When the latter lost the last shreds of his money, it had seemed a decent thing to make him resident secretary of the Gun Club, besides securing a splendid man for it. With twelve hundred dollars a year, and forty miles between him and civilization, he was a treasure. The club consisted of men he knew; preserving game was second nature to him; and the coming and going of his friends with provisions and drinks extremely pleasant. That he had proved practical, and kept his accounts to a hair, had surprised Alston; but that he had a daughter went beyond anything.

"I never even knew he was married," he growled, blankly. "I suppose you'll

say next he keeps his wife down here, and his boys—a man like that's sure to have nice, cheerful little boys!"

"Well, he hasn't," returned Updyke, shortly. "There's only Miss Sugden, and you'll never lay eyes on her"—he was going to say, "if she can help it," but he was too prudent.

"What does she do with herself—down here?" Alston asked it with stupefaction; he had caught a glimpse of the cut of Miss Sugden's skirts, and they were the skirts of Newport.

"Does accounts; runs the house and servants, and keeps out of the way," succinctly. She had certainly kept out of his, to his unspeakable annoyance; it was not for Sugden's sake that Mr. Updyke had worked himself to the bone to secure him the secretaryship, and he had been anything but pleased when, on Alston's arrival, he remembered that he must go and leave that gentleman behind him. But there was no mending it, especially by speech; he did not even dare inquire how long Alston meant to stay. He gathered up his casts. "I've got to get up to the house, if I'm going to drive forty miles between lunch and dinner," he said, easily. "Coming?"

"No," said Alston; he wriggled gloomily on the scented bank that had been so heavenly sweet and retired half an hour ago. Sugden's daughter or not, he supposed the girl was a lady; and there would be ladylike reforms in the clubhouse. Anyone who could make Sugden keep that kind of accounts would have rules about noise soon, and dirty boots, and fishy smells on the veranda. "Sugden ought to see the Gun Club's no place for a girl," he growled.

Updyke shrugged his shoulders; the desire of his soul and body was to see to that himself on his return. In the meantime there was nothing to do but to hope devoutly that Alston would not strike up a friendship with Miss Sugden; she was his one ewe lamb—though so far she had kept her fold to herself by doing those careful accounts for her father. Updyke meant to marry her, if he had to coerce heaven and earth, and the girl herself; but the few words about Alston which he mingled with his

hardly-won farewell to her were not intentionally misleading.

That gentleman, having seen off his friend in the wagon which was the only means of communication with the outside world and the railway, went to sleep on the veranda, and woke forgetful of the day's alarms. There was no one to be seen but the other three members in residence, and no undesirable reforms or females. Tubby Lawson, as easily arrayed as usual, stood in front of him, prodding him up for the evening's fishing; and the long afternoon shadows stretched emptily down the spruce-covered hills to the rough-hewed door of the clubhouse, set in scented pines that showed glimpses of the living lake water between them, and gave way behind what was known as "the slough" to the game-filled covers that were the Gun Club's pride. Mr. Alston sniffed with rapture the ineffable mingling of balsam and wood smoke and cool air, and remembered the sweltering asphalt in town.

"Lord! it's good to be here!" he murmured; and Tubby Lawson nodded.

"Cooking's improved," he said, sententiously, "and I've a new canvas boat—my own invention. It's knocked spots out of the fish in that beastly slough we never could get at. Get a move on—if you're coming."

There was no need to ask. The sinking sun, the calm lake with just enough ripple to hide his casts, called Alston with the master word; and smooth, slack Tubby Lawson was a better companion than Updyke, who was not himself lately. He passed an ideal three hours before he returned, soaked and happy, to a dinner that had certainly improved since his last visit to the clubhouse.

As the days went on, it dawned on him that other things there were improved, too; little things that had always worried him. Somebody had removed, body and bones, the pig and pigsty; and he wondered where the dining-table flowers came from, till he wandered behind the stable one morning and found the glowing mass of garden some one had made there.

"I expect it's Miss Sugden," commented Tubby Lawson, simply; and the matter-of-course words turned Alston's remembrance back to the girl he had forgotten. She certainly kept herself out of the way; and he had a certain and sudden desire to see her.

He might as well have tried to catch a Jack o' Lantern. The club members were no concern of Lalla Sugden's. She did not consider them at all, till Updyke put it into her head to consider them—which meant to keep out of their sight for fear they might be like him. She was happy in her way, and she had forgotten all about the outside world till Updyke put that, too, in her head. But she had no interests there, any more than Sugden had; neither of them as much as took a paper. If they had, she might have been used to seeing Mr. Edward Blake Alston's name in it; but, blackly scrawled under his visiting card in the members' book, it had meant nothing to her—till the day she came around a corner in the path where no one ever went but herself and Mr. Lawson. Lawson stood there now; but it was not at him that she looked. The man behind him was not the sort of man who came to the Gun Club.

Before she could move, Lawson hailed her.

"Miss Sugden," he exclaimed, thankfully and unescapably, over the two yards of moss that separated them, "do help me out! I left my boat at the side of the slough, and I can't find the path to it," and he wiped his brow too guilelessly. He was tired of fishing, and he wanted to go home and play pinochle with Sugden.

"It's just here," she answered, surprised. "But I'll show you. It would not take five minutes."

"Awfully good of you," returned Lawson, smoothly. "Miss Sugden will take you, Alston! May I introduce Teddy—Mr. Alston?" and before the entrapped couple could speak he had departed, with the unexpected swiftness of a fat man.

Alston took off his cap and regarded Sugden's daughter. He did not often get a shock of surprise, but he had one

now; he had not been prepared for this sort of girl.

"I couldn't think of troubling you," he exclaimed, uncomfortably; for an audacious man, he was abashed, but she did not know it. She had glanced at him and looked away. He was not at all like the other members; he was dark and tall and clean-shaved, with something nice about his eyes that did not go with Updyke's sketch of him.

"I'll show you, of course," she said, simply. "I was going to the slough." She stood gazing after the fleeing Lawson, with the sun filtering through the white-flowering moosewood bushes on her hair and turning it copper, and the almond-scented linnea at her feet not so softly, palely pink as her cheeks. She never even remembered that if this stranger had been Updyke, she would promptly have been busy over the deer run. The businesslike simplicity of her astounded Alston. He spoke to put himself, not her, at ease, as he fell in behind her on the narrow path to the slough.

"Do you ever wonder why it's called so?" he inquired, without much brilliance. "A slough's really a bog, not a stillwater."

"This is more like a canal," she turned her head to speak to him, and once more she liked his eyes, "if it wasn't so hard to get at. You could never," they were both laughing, "have got there the way Mr. Lawson was going; there's nothing but swamp. I don't think he has the remotest idea where he left his boat."

"He said he had." Alston was watching her spring from stone to stone, twist under fallen trees, glide over the endless, scented trail of flowers and the deep moss that sprang to the feet. He had never imagined Sugden's daughter would be beautiful.

"Here we are," she cried, slipping through a thicket of Indian willow, "and——" She stopped in dismay. "There's no boat here! He couldn't have tied it, and it's drifted down to the outlet; there's a current here, though you wouldn't think it."

Alston looked at the place before him as if he had never seen it before. The

stillwater lay dark at the foot of a low bank of cushioned moss, and those wax-fleshed, lemon-scented flowers that have no name; overhead the bushes arched in young green, and the slough that reflected them was full of water lilies. Half of it was in shadow; the other half wine-colored in the sun, stirless, smooth, wonderful. To each side it wound off like a ribbon between low banks of flowering blueberry and purple arrow-heads set in miles of nameless green. He had not remembered the beauty of it, and he was suddenly, absurdly glad that he had not found it with Lawson and his flask and his stories.

As he looked, a great trout rose, and Miss Sugden spoke practically.

"You can't get any fish without a boat. We must go up the hill and round to the outlet; it will have caught there."

Alston put down his rod.

"Would you mind if I confessed I was sick of fishing?" said he, slowly. "And I don't want to climb that hill, either. Can't we stay here, just a little while? It's—I like it." He drew a long breath, and looked about him; perhaps not by design. Where he stood was certainly exquisite.

For one instant Miss Sugden hesitated; but in that instant he had his coat off to make a seat for her, and she laughed. She sank down on the green moss among the flowers. Five minutes could not matter out of a life given up to the club accounts and loneliness; and there was a sweetness about—the flowers. Alston thought so, too, as he watched them mid-nod over the edges of her white gown. But she had not known how tall he was till he stretched himself at her feet and began to talk.

Neither of them dreamed it was the beginning of things; but Updyke, who had tried in vain for it, might have known better. Day after day the linnea lasted and new blossoms came out on the slender, translucent stalks of the flower without a name—and day after day Alston and Lalla Sugden sat by the slough, till their world seemed to have no boundaries but green moss and wine-

dark water. He learned all there was to know about her life, even to the long winter when she had nothing to do but feed the red deer, and he had sense enough not to tell her it was pitiful; but he wanted to send her all the papers in America, and most of the books. He had no more thought of Updyke in the matter than he had of Tubby Lawson; but, curiously enough, Lalla Sugden had, the day he told her he must go away. She sat quite silent among the last of the linnea, and Alston looked at her.

"There was something I wanted to ask you," he said, slowly. "Would you like to have ladies allowed here? Because there's going to be a meeting about it." A meeting he would have fought tooth and nail a month ago; but it had dawned on him lately that if ever he married the woman he meant to, he was not going to have her shut out of the Gun Club.

"It wouldn't make much difference to me," answered Miss Sugden, composedly; she knew what the attitude of club ladies would be to the secretary's daughter.

"You can't tell," said Alston, soberly; and it was her turn to look at him, but he had no mind to explain. "See here," he asked, abruptly, "do none of your old friends ever write to you?"

"One girl does, sometimes." She wondered why he wanted to know. "She lives in Long Island. But, honestly, when I get her letters they don't do me much good; they're all about people I never heard of. Sometimes I don't read them."

Alston laughed, as if he had thought of something.

"I wonder if you'll do that with mine—because I'm going to write to you," he announced, coolly, "and I promise not to tell you one thing about people you don't know. I'm going to write all about myself—if you'll read my letters."

"I don't know," she hesitated. "I mayn't get them. If there are no members here, we don't send in. You don't know how quiet it is here then, nor," she had not liked that laugh, "how happy."

"It's just what I do know." He sat upright and looked at her, without laughter. "It's been like that flower that hasn't any name," he said, slowly, pointing at one, "only sweeter; and"—his hard hand moved swiftly and caught hers—"I'm tired of it!"

Every bit of color went out of Miss Sugden's face.

"You're going away to-morrow; that needn't worry you," she said. Her voice was unexceptionable, but she could not look at him. There was something at her heart that hurt her. It had been sweet, she knew that—and he was tired of it. At the sudden tightening of his hand, the blood raced to her cheeks again.

"You can't go, till you've listened," he said, "even if you'd rather not hear. I'm tired of it, because it isn't enough—and there isn't even any name to it! I've loved you ever since I saw you, and I've never said so; I've never kissed you; I've never asked you. Sweet, can't you care? Won't you let me take you away from here some day? Lalla, look at me!" And it was so close into his eyes, so close to his hard, fine-grained cheek, she did look that she flinched back. She had known what the hard feel of his shoulder would be, but she could never bear the unimaginable joy of his lips on hers. "Lalla," he was whispering, and, tender though the voice was, there was no trepidation in it, "answer. Won't you even speak?"

"I—don't know," said the girl, slowly. She would have given worlds not to have thought of Updyke, and what he had said. "Teddy Alston's way," and "He's just got out of his fifth engagement, so he's resting, like the advertisements in the theater." Well, she would not help him to the sixth! If he cared, he could come back. It had been too quick, and—he was too sure of her, for a man with all those broken promises behind him.

"You'd better—think—a little," she said, at last; she both disliked and distrusted Updyke, yet he was swaying her now, and she flashed out, as Alston's only answer was to laugh securely into her clouded eyes: "You can't be sure;

you know you can't! I—there are——" But she stopped short. She could not put it into words.

"I don't care what there is," retorted Alston, coolly; he stood up very straight and looked down at her. "When is it prettiest here, in our path?" he asked; and it was not at all what she had expected him to say. "Tell me—quick!"

"When—I don't know," she stared at him, startled at the change in his voice, as five other girls had probably been startled before. "When the berries are ripe, I think—in the August moon."

"Well, I'll come back then, at the August moon." He made no attempt to touch her, or persuade her to answer. "And, meantime, I'll write to you—and not about other people. I have to go to Long Island now; but in the end of August I'm coming back." And, in spite of herself, she believed him.

It was like waking from a dream to find herself standing one afternoon of late August by the clubhouse door opposite Updyke—Updyke! If she had known that it was meeting Tubby Lawson that had brought him hot foot to the Gun Club, and that he was honestly desperate as he stood in front of her, she might have taken what he was saying differently. As it was, she neither smoothed over nor regretted her refusal to marry him, because she was saying one sentence over and over to herself like a child learning a lesson: "Teddy Alston was married last week in Long Island—married!" It was not a thing there could be any doubt about; it was all quite plain and simple. With Updyke had come a letter from the girl who wrote to her, and she had been at the wedding; she sent the detail of the bridesmaids' dresses. There was another letter, too; but she was afraid to open it. Updyke had known perfectly well from whom it was as he handed it to her, and had spoken out, because he was sick and shaken at the horrid confirmation of Lawson's talk.

"Go on with your letters; don't mind me," he said, thickly; he stood opposite her in the August sunset, without moving.

"They're—not important," she mut-

tered, and caught something in his face that steadied her. He, of all men, should not know she was afraid. She tore open Teddy Alston's letter that must tell her of his marriage, and stood as motionless as Updyke. It told her nothing at all; it was like all the letters he had ever written her, and might have been read from the housetops. She had thought that was nice of him, but she saw now that not one word out of all his letters could have made anyone think he meant to marry the girl he wrote to. And she supposed he had not. The August moon was full; and he was married, last week, in Long Island!

She crushed the letter in her palm; and, as Updyke saw it, he knew what he wanted to know. There had been no good news in that letter; Lawson had said Alston meant to go back to the Gun Club before the end of August, and—it did not look as if he were coming. A blind fury of temptation came over the man. If he could do anything—anything at all—to tide over the next few days! He was here, and Alston in Long Island! He pulled a paper out of his pocket.

"Have you seen this?" he asked, rather breathlessly. "You see, they've altered the constitution of the club—about not admitting ladies."

"Yes," said Miss Sugden, indifferently; she had caught the familiar name on the folded paper he had given her, and it brought her back her wits. Before he could speak she had slipped away, casually and effectively, as usual.

Updyke wiped his forehead, relief always made him warm. If he knew anything of women, and could count on the next few days, all Lawson had let out to him would be a help, not a hindrance. He drew a hard breath of the sweet, untainted air; looked from the great hills to the sky, congratulating himself on his chances—and felt suddenly sick.

"I suppose I'm a scoundrel," he said, blankly; he had never thought he could be a scoundrel, even for Lalla Sugden, for whom he had schemed and planned this year past. He had done nothing—nothing—if he had been in town—but

out here it looked different. He almost wished Alston had come out with him, so that they might have fought the thing out fairly; but the only train of the day had brought no one but himself. He fancied he could hear the touf-touf of that empty train as it steamed away from him and gave him his chance—his one chance—with Lalla Sugden; the sound was so real, so insistent, that it steadied him. "I can't do it," he said, aloud; it was perhaps the only time in years he had known a thing was beyond him and past fighting. "Besides, the other will be the best way!" He got on his feet, and went down the hill after Lalla Sugden.

She had made for the east and the shadows; unconsciously, out of old habit, for the path to the slough; and when she stood there, she saw the change in it, for the flowers were over. There were hard, rank greens, over-ripe pigeon berries, whose blackened scarlet spelled disaster among a raffle of bleached ferns—and Teddy was married. She had not known how she cared, nor how easy it would be for him to do it to a girl who hardly ever got any letters; but she knew now. She stood up, and hated the moss where she and Alston had sat together; let it grow dark, and was glad. She heard the tame deer moving restlessly down the hill behind her, and for once she did not call them. She was more caged than the deer behind their wire run; she had nowhere to go; and she had got more out of Updyke's paper than a marriage. Alston was coming here with his wife, who "would be the first lady ever admitted to the sacred precincts of the Gun Club." It was that she could not bear; and she quivered through all her body.

"There's only one thing for me to do," she thought, passionately, as Updyke had meant her to think. "Mr. Updyke! But I—can't! I—" She sprang aside in the sudden fear that she must, because he had followed her; and as she turned to run, some one called her name.

Miss Sugden could not answer, because it was not Updyke. Teddy had

been very quick from his honeymoon, and quicker still to show his wife the path to the slough. She did not even wonder how he had got there.

"Lalla," the only voice in the world called again, "where are you?" It was very dark, but she could have seen him coming to her in the blackest night, in her grave.

"How do you do?" she said, mechanically; and felt proud of the decent, commonplace words.

"I don't know," laughing. "I'm too glad to be here. I thought I'd never find you." His hands fell on hers quick and hard, and, even in the dark, before the moonrise, she could see his eyes as he stooped to her.

"No," she cried, sharply; it would kill her if he dared to kiss her. "I—you—"

"Do you mean," he stood, checked a little, "I shouldn't have come?"

"You could have told me—first." She had got her voice steady, if her lips shook.

"I couldn't," cheerfully. "I was afraid till the eleventh hour that I couldn't get here—and you've no telegraph. I only managed it by loading up an old automobile on the branch line, and getting along somehow on it. As it is," he hesitated, thinking of Updyke's somehow unwelcome luggage at the clubhouse, "we shan't have all our time alone."

"I don't think we need it!" She was past self-control in one instant. "You—you have your wife!" She moved past him like a whirlwind, not quite far enough from the reach of his arm.

"So you heard, too!" he said. He caught her hard and fast, coolly; and in the silence she was acutely conscious of a deer checking suddenly close behind them, even of its curiously human breathing. "Do you know, I never thought of it till to-night, when your father was surprised to see me alone? I never counted on your seeing the papers, because you'd said they bored you, and I wasn't to send you any; but you could have asked Updyke."

"Asked! It was Teddy Alston—in Long Island!" The black headlines of

Updyke's paper were swimming before her eyes; but what she really thought of was that the deer behind her must have been terrified by that automobile; she could almost hear the thick beating of its heart.

"That isn't I," trenchantly, though her voice had frightened him. "Nobody ever called me Teddy but the fellows down here. There are two Edward Blake Alstons—you could have seen in the members' book. We were both named after the same grandfather, but it's my cousin who's married Miss Lauterbach—you couldn't have thought it was I! Do you think so now—and now?" He had kissed her as if there were no doubt, because it was no time for half measures. "You knew I was going to marry you. You wouldn't promise me anything, but I'm not like Teddy—used to engagements. I felt bound, if you didn't. And I never thought of writing to you about another man's wedding; you said that girls always told you about people you didn't know. But Updyke could have explained; he knew."

At the confidence in Alston's tone, the quick breathing in the bushes was suddenly still, as if a man who had come there to try being straight was too late to do anything but stand stolidly to hear himself branded a liar. But the revelation did not come. What she said cut harder, though it was only an irrelevant whisper:

"It was—bringing her here—that I minded."

Updyke, who had meant to be a liar, and then a repentant hero, turned to go.

"I've no sense at all," said Alston, with a sudden grim shrewdness. "But it didn't happen to be true." He caught her to him with the ownership she had once resented. "I don't deserve it much," he whispered, "but I wish you'd look at me, and say you don't mind marrying a fool—and God bless the man who invented automobiles!"

But Lalla Sugden was past speech. Honey colored, vast, splendid, the August moon swam up over a new and glorious stillwater; and in the light of it, she could see his eyes.

TO-MORROW

TO-MORROW and to-morrow—! Shall there be
Perchance a morrow when I may not see
Your face beside me any more? Ah, no,
My love—my love, I cannot let you go.
Like sun in Egypt, ever kind and fair,
My heart must wake at dawn, and know you there.
No dread of day that holds a weeping rain,
No fear of chilly love, and shadowed pain.
But ever perfect—ever wise and true,
To-morrow and to-morrow holding you.

HELEN HAY WHITNEY.



The Chivalry of Captain Bodfish

By Holman F. Day



APTAIN NYMPHUS BODFISH, of the schooner *Jairus Paul*, set out on his inland journey in the early morning of a hot July day. He hated the land. He gazed malevolently on the skinny beast that the liveryman had hitched between the shafts of the beach wagon. It was the first horse Captain Bodfish had ever driven. But he did not dare to take along a Jehu, for he wanted to keep his errand a secret.

His disgust increased hourly. The sun frizzled him. Perspiration streamed from under the visor of his pilot-cloth cap, and ran in tickling rivulets into his short chin beard. Big, buzzing flies, stringing black flies, and little midges frolicked on his oozy expanse of countenance. But, with a sailorman's cautiousness in unknown waters, he felt it necessary to keep tight hold of the

"tiller ropes," as he mentally styled the reins.

"An' still, there's folks that will live ashore, an' let ev'ry kind o' bug from Dan to Be'sheby have a hunk out of 'em," he gritted. "An' there's wimmen folks that stick their noses up 'cause a man won't leave the sea an' come an' farm along o' them. I b'lieve I can reelly talk to that woman now!"

He saw men down on their knees pulling weeds; others were clanking hoe blades into stony soil, and the sun beat upon their rounded backs.

"Able bodied farmer I'd make!" grunted Cap'n Nymphus. "Nose down to the dirt, an' moss sproutin' between my shoulders. An' a woman will set down an' tell ye about the fields blossomin' with the sweet leetle daisies, an' about the green trees an' the a-romy of the flowers! A romy! Pnh! If that ain't porgy pummy I'm smellin', may I never see open water ag'in! They say

it makes crops grow. Ain't surprised. If I was a crop, I'd grow nineteen foot tall to git away from that smell."

A blistering calm settled over the ledgy hills.

"Says that woman to me," he muttered, "'You come up into the country once, Cap'n Bodfish, to where I live, an' see the medders an' the hills, an' hear the birds singin' an' the brooks babblin'. Oh, you'll hate the sea!' Wal, I've come up! I'm glad I've come up. I've seen it. Now I know what I'm talkin' about. You just hear me lay the law down to that woman!"

And so on and on in the sunshine's white glare rode Cap'n Nymphus Bodfish, grumbling stormily to himself. At the top of a hill, along about noon, he distinguished certain topographical signs that the livery-stable keeper at the Port had pounded into his understanding. He pulled up to reconnoiter.

A country wagon was coming up the hill, its whiffletree yawking with an insistence that made the captain grind his teeth.

"Ahoy, shipmate!" he called, with some embarrassment. "Can you point out from here the moorin's of the Widder Trypheny Trask?"

The man yanked his horse to a standstill, set his elbows on his knees, and drawled, after a critical survey of the stranger:

"F'r a rough guess, I'm goin' to say your name's Bodfish." The man's wink rather frightened the captain.

"It's all right," the stranger went on; "I don't blame ye. I live next neighbor to Trypheny, an' she let on to my wife jest's soon's she come back from her last visit to her relatives down to the Port. Ye've got hold of a master good woman there, an' I welcome ye as a neighbor. It's a good farm, too, an' I think ye'll do well on it." His eyes surveyed the prospect serenely. "Practical or book farmer?" he inquired, with bland interest.

"I hain't either," grunted the captain. "I've follered the sea."

"Oh, yes; we know that, all of us. But Trypheny has said you was goin' to settle here on the farm, an' so I

reckoned ye must have tried farmin' on the side."

This calm assertion that he was going to settle took away the captain's breath. He stared a moment at the amiable countenance of his prospective neighbor, then snorted disgustedly, and started along his old horse.

"You jest wait an' listen to me," he muttered. "Reportin' round that I'm goin' to leave the sea an' squat here in a dust-heap like an old hen! That woman has got to be set where she b'longs. There's goin' to be an auction sale bill on that fence inside of sixty days—now you hear me!"

The widow was standing under the porch, awaiting him with a cheery smile on her round face. A bashful grin wrinkled under his beard. His knees trembled in a familiar way as he eased himself down from the wagon; and when she gave him her hand and inquired, archly, "Well, cap'n, how do you like your futur' home?" he stammered, "Fust rate! A number one, with a dot!" and then muttered angrily to himself, as he followed her into the house: "This is the kind of a blastnation fool a man makes of himself when he lets a woman take his hawser!"

He ate a dinner whose "chickle fix-in's" astonished his simple sailor tastes. After that he followed the widow about on a tour of inspection from room to room, from cool cellar to attic like a herb-scented furnace, from woodshed, in which the dry wood was tiered as carefully as gold ingots, then to the big barn, through which the breeze was volleying—its great doors being thrown wide open to the haymakers. They trudged through the orchard, where she proudly showed him the green fruit loading the branches; then she led him across the odorous kitchen garden, and from a hillock pointed out the half-dozen cows, feeding placidly on the pasture slope.

"And, take it all in all," she continued, "there ain't a farm in this town that is under sech a state of cultivation. Poor John Trask jest wore himself out here pullin' stumps and h'istin' off rocks. I'd be an ungrateful woman to leave it all to strangers now, Cap'n Bodfish, for

they would never pay a price to make up for the work my poor John put in here. An' hired help ain't what it's cracked up to be, if there ain't only a woman to boss things."

The captain had been trying to think of some opening to declare his sentiments on the farming question. But every time he had begun to stammer, she took the hesitating words off his lips and turned them into grateful acquiescence in her plans. The Widow Trask was a quick talker.

"John was clearin' up that piece yender, when he jest plum giv' up beat and died," said the widow, with pathos, pointing to a field of cradle-knolls.

"It's come to me," blurted the agitated captain, grasping this occasion desperately, "that it ain't jest right for me to step in an' take all this advantage of Number One. I've been pond'rin' a lot about it sence I've been trampin' around with ye to-day."

The widow stopped, and stared at him with astonished indignation.

"Cap'n Bodfish," said she, stiffly, "will you please explain to me what you mean by sech talk as that?"

"Why—why—bein' a man more'n ordinary sensitive, I should feel—that is, I should kind o' keep thinkin'—I wasn't usin' Number One—"

"Cap'n Nymphus, I'll thank you not to refer to John Trask as if he'd been a convict in State prison. Now, what I want to know is, do you intend, or be you hank'rin', to go back on all the things you said to me down to the Port 'bout lovin' me, et cet'ry? Excuse my plain speakin', but, bein' a lone woman, I have had to be a bus'ness woman, too."

All the lordly ultimatums that he had laboriously thought out on his tedious way up now refused to come to the captain's tongue. He simply realized that somehow he had made up his mind not to leave the sea. Yet this woman's eye made him tremble, not through fear, but on account of a deeper sentiment. And when she joggled his elbow and snapped again, "Come, now! Be ye goin' to settle here an' give up your roamin' foolishness?" he had spirit only to quaver, "No."

The Widow Trask was a woman of decision.

"I have liked you fust-rate," she said. "Ye seemed to be a man that had staminy and principle from what I had heard an' seen. But if ye're jest lalligaggin' 'round, I've had enough of it. Now, you might as well understand fust as last. For more'n six months I've been stavin' off Watson Webb, who runs the Conham poor farm over there on the hill. He's a widderer, an' ain't got no place of his own, an' he's dead set after me. I feel that it's my duty to tell ye that. An' I've got to have a responsible head here, before my hired help drives me crazy."

"But I know I wouldn't be wuth a tinker's dam on the quarter-deck of a barn, or cruisin' across a plowed field, Mis' Trask," wailed Captain Bodfish. The name of Watson Webb struck a chill to his heart.

"An' I know ye'd work in all right," insisted the widow; "you're used to handlin' men, an' you're quick to ketch ideas. An' I've been thinkin' that a man that's been smashed around all over the Lord's creation would appreciate a good home, an' relish settlin' down more'n the ordinary man. But ye've said ye wouldn't. So, if ye mean it, don't keep in the way of better men."

"Tain't that—tain't it at all!" he wheezed, in agitated tones. "It's jest as I vowed an' declared to ye down to the Port—I never see'd a woman that I could reelly take to till I see'd you. There hain't no use—I can't git along happy in this world without you. But it's about the farm. I hate to step in here where Num—where some one else has done—all the liftin' an' luggin'. It would make me feel sort o' meechin' all the time, an'—an' as if I was takin' advantage, ye know."

He slid a sidelong glance to meet the widow's keen and quizzical eye.

"Cat's foot, Cap'n Nymphus Bodfish!" she cried, scornfully. He shifted his eyes back and forth swift as shuttles, and then looked away over the shimmery hills. "Better alwa's tell the truth an' shame the devil. Are you still hangin' onto the idee that I'm goin' to

sell out this farm an' move down to the Port, an' be a widder two-thirds of the time, whilst you are sloshin' around out to sea somewheres? I told ye once, an' I tell ye ag'in—I *shan't!*"

"But think of the chanst you'd have to see furrin parts," he faltered, repeating a well-worn argument, "sailin' with me down to the sunny south, as the poets call it, an'——"

"Phut on your sunny south an' your poets! Do you think that a woman born, bred and raised on a farm is goin' to coop herself up in a cubbyhole where there ain't room to swing a cat? Cap'n Nymphus Bodfish, you come down to bus'ness now! Be ye goin' to give up this nonsense, an' settle here, an' take this farm off'n my shoulders? Yes or no?"

The captain's lips tightened stubbornly. A sense of his own inefficiency in speech before this woman—he who was known from Quoddy Head to Key West as a master of sea repatee and quarter-deck volubility—choked him. He felt his hair bristling in his impotent rage. Oh, to feel the surge under him, and to straddle his legs, and have half a dozen lazy sailors aloft at that moment!

He gritted his teeth, and went stamping across the sward to his team. He amazed himself by the desperate recklessness with which he wheeled the outfit around the yard and through the gate.

"I hain't goin' to sacrifice ev'rything to come up here an' wallop gurry!" he shouted, stuttering in his wrath.

"Sacrifice! Sacrifice!" she shrieked. "An' that's the name you give to marryin' me, hey? Oh, you mis'able sea scalawag! I only wisht Superintendent Watson Webb was here this minit!"

His chin was over his shoulder as he shouted at her, and he was glowering as irately as she. All at once the wagon stopped so suddenly that he was thrown in a heap against the dasher. A forward wheel had hooked a hitching-post. The captain got up on his knees, and, in his agitation, reached out and pushed against the post as though he were easing off a stranded dory.

"Take your reins an' back up your

hoss, you dratted fool!" the widow squealed. "I don't want folks to think you're drunk. A pretty farmer you'd make! Thank the Lord, I've got my eyes open fur's you're concerned!"

The captain finally got clear of the post and drove away without a word. In this landlocked horizon, alone in a wagon, an uncomfortable beast ahead of him, an angry woman behind him, he was so much out of his element that his tongue seemed paralyzed.

He was in such a state of mind toward everything human that he simply looked sideways sourly when a woman came pushing through some roadside alders.

"I'd like to have a word with you," she called. The captain made no motion to check his horse.

"Hain't you Cap'n Nymphus Bodfish? If you be, won't you stop a minit?" Her voice was almost a wail. She was a fat, shapeless, palpitating woman, with the cylinder of her form merely notched by a waistline. Two children followed her from the bushes. With berry-smears, brown faces, they resembled oddly-decorated paposes.

"You won't know *me* from Adam's wife, Cap'n Bodfish," said the woman, humbly, as he pulled up and scowled at her; "but I knew *you* the minit I laid eyes on ye. I saw ye when ye went past a few hours ago, an' I've been waitin' here." She came to the side of the wagon, fumbling in the pocket of her calico skirt. She handed up a battered tintype picture, first scrubbing it across her breast. It portrayed a man of thin features, drooping mustache and long hair, parted low on one side and combed up in a swirl over the other temple like a wave breaking on a beach. "I reckon ye know him," she said, with a little thrill of pride in her voice.

"Looks to me like Cap'n Lorenzo Crummett," said the captain, squinting at the picture. He added, ungraciously: "Most along the coast knows him. I remember that he lost the *Mortimer Peace*, the *J. B. Tarbutt* and the *Rose Rawlins*, one after the other. What's he doin' now?"

"He's cook on a railro'd construction train," the woman faltered.

"Wal, if there's a mast on it anywheres, he'll lose that train, too."

"I want ye to understand that Cap'n Lorenzo Crummett is my husband!" the woman snapped. "I've heard him speak of you, Cap'n Nymphus Bodfish, an' he never slung you down, either."

"Never had to," returned the captain, without losing his self-possession at her announcement. "I 'tended to bus'ness 'stead of bein' a shipboard dude."

"Lorenzo Crummett was the handsomest captain that ever sailed out o' Portland harbor, an' the rest of you was jealous of him—that's the whole story."

"Look here, marm, if you've stopped me out here in this brillin' sun jest simply to discuss Lorenz Crummett's looks an' gen'ral style, you'll have to excuse *me*!" The captain tried to twist his tongue to pound out a cluck to the horse.

"Oh, Cap'n Bodfish, this ain't no time for us two to git to squabblin'," whined the woman. Tears ran down her tanned cheeks. "They've took an' made paupers of me an' my young ones. Lorenzo went away to cook on the construction train, an' he had to mix in s'ciety more or less up in P'lermo, where they're stoppin', for he's pop'lar, ye know, an' so he got behind in sendin' money home. I had to call on for help down to Parrot Cove, where I was stoppin', an' the s'lec'men there come back onto this town, where we had gained res'dunce. Lorenzo would have been on his feet ag'in all right in a little while, but they wouldn't listen. Think of it, Cap'n Bodfish! Mé, Oleander Crummett, shoved onto the town with my two young ones! They hadn't no right to do it. It's a disgrace!"

"Onpleasant, to be sure," commented the captain, perfunctorily. Woman's tears made him uneasy.

"Only last week Lorenzo sent five dollars here to me so's I could come to P'lermo; but that ding-ratted old Watson Webb took it away from me. He said this town didn't propose to have me runnin' up bills till Lorenzo got settled to stiddy work somewheres. Think of that, cap'n! I might's well be a nigger slave! 'T that rate, I may

never git away from here. Oh, Cap'n Bodfish! be you goin' to see a brother sea cap'n's wife an' young ones made slaves of by these mis'able, clodhoppin', inshore old rips?" With a shore woman's intuition, she knew how to stir a seaman's prejudices. She clutched the dusty wheel rim with trembling hands, and looked up at him with the pathos of an abused animal. The children clung to her faded skirt and whimpered. She pleaded: "Oh, won't you go up there into the field yender, where he's workin' them paupers, an' tell that Watson Webb what's what about my case? If he realizes we've got a friend like you, he'll back down an' give us our rights. He's an old coward. It'll only take a word."

"Ye say Cap Lorenz sent ye money to git away with?" Bodfish stared at her meditatively. At the name of Watson Webb he felt his hair bristling again, as it had bristled once before that day.

"Yes, and Watson Webb he took it an' kept it."

The captain nipped his beard between his lips.

"I don't know much about the law amongst these 'ere land piruts," he muttered, "but I know that the Bible says that what God has j'ined no man shall bust up—or suthin' like that—an' this 'ere Watson Webb seems to be makin' a special bus'ness of it, one way 'n' uther."

"Mis' Crummett, you jest act as kedge for this craft till I come back, an' I'll board yender chap for a look at his papers."

The superintendent of the poor farm was "teamin'" his crew of tottering old paupers in a cornfield. It was on a hill-side overlooking Widow Trask's cozy homestead, and Watson Webb had peered that way many times under his toil-cracked palm since the stranger's team went dragging in at the gate that day. After its arrival, he had been harsh in his speech to the old men, and had muttered strangely to himself as he worked.

From his post he observed narrowly the promenade of the widow and the blue-garbed man, and some of his recent

fears were clinched by the spectacle. He had heard of this sea-captain suitor. When the stranger drove away, the widow seemed to be affectionately waving her hand, and Webb gritted his teeth as he gazed. From his hillside, he could not guess that the widow's gesture was a brandishing of her indignant fist.

Now he watched the captain's rolling approach across the field with an evil scowl. On the captain's features was a scowl fully as evil.

"You the feller that runs this poor farm?" Bodfish demanded, in the same tone he would have employed on ship-board to a lazy old tarheels.

"Yas, I be!" Webb roared, thumping down his hoe blade violently.

"You're the pirut that's keepin' that poor woman down yender away from her legit'mate husband, be ye, hey?"

"Say, you git off'n these premises!" yelled the infuriated Webb. He swung his hoe about his head.

The captain put up his fists with a promptitude that was suspiciously alert. "Come on!" he vociferated. "I can lick you and them paupers throwed in!"

But Webb did not lay down his hoe to accept this challenge.

"Hain't ye goin' to fight?" Bodfish demanded.

"You must think a public off'cer of this town is in nice bus'ness standin' out here in plain sight o' the ro'd an' fightin' ev'ry tramp that comes past. G'way, or I'll scrape your ear off with this hoe blade!"

"There's the woods down there, you white-livered old mud foot! They can't see us there. I'll stump ye down!" But Webb still swung his hoe with vicious "swiffs." As each cut came nearer his nose, Captain Bodfish backed away, cursing the cowardice of landlubbers. He offered the paupers extravagant sums for the loan of a hoe, but the old men stared at the one-sided conflict, drooling in amazement. The attacking force was obliged to leave the field.

When he was back in the wagon, Bodfish growled to the eagerly-questioning Oleander:

"Can you git out of that poorhouse all secret? Wal, if you can, and can

trust one o' them paupers to help ye with your luggage, you be at the cross-ro'd down there under that big oak to-night, as soon after ten as you can git there. We'll see if land piruts is goin' to have it all their own way. We'll see, Mis' Crummett!" She went away, sobbing her gratitude.

Captain Bodfish lurked in the woods two miles down the road till the appointed hour. He found Oleander at the trysting place. At his cautious "Hist!" she came stealing out of the shadows of the big oak, her children cuddling apprehensively behind her like little partridges. A tall, lank old man followed, staggering along with two heavy canvas valises.

"This is Mister Amasa Orff, Cap'n Bodfish," said the woman, in the bland tones of a hostess. Then, behind her hand, she hissed: "Don't mind him, cap'n—anything he does, but humor him. He think's he a faowl of some kind. That's his only out." She added in louder tones: "This is the gentleman who was kind enough to bring my things down for me."

The tall man set down the valises, stretched out one leg sideways, spread his fingers like a fan, and, after running his hand down his leg, croaked feebly.

"Say how d'ye do to him," hissed Oleander in the captain's ear. "That's his way of sayin' it. You mustn't hurt his feelin's and git him vi'lent."

"How 'y' ye!" grumbled the captain, running an eye of disfavor over the aged chretin. Then he demanded of Oleander, in a gruff aside: "What ye got a thing like that for?"

"I couldn't trust the intelligenter paupers," she whined.

The captain fumbled in his pocket, and then handed a half-dollar to her. "Give that to it," he ordered, "and tell it to set them valises in behind."

The creature obeyed, hopping along on his thin legs and craning his neck with the grotesque air of a barnyard fowl. The woman boosted up her children and followed. The old pauper had tossed his coin on the sward, and was circling about it with delighted "crawlings."

"Does it know enough to go back to its roost?" asked the captain, lifting the reins. But before Oleander could reply, the man picked up the half-dollar with a quick movement like a "peck," and, flapping his arms, made a spring into the rear of the moving wagon.

"Good man gives me nice corn," he creaked, in raspy falsetto. "Old Webb stingy man. I'll go, too!" He settled himself on a valise. The captain was holding a child on his knees. Oleander had another.

"Tell it there ain't goin' to be no sto'-ways on this 'ere trip," rasped Bodfish.

"You'll have to git down, Mister Amasa," said Oleander, gently; adding, in an aside to the captain: "Dretful good man if it wa'n't for his pee-cooliar notion that he's a faowl." The pauper sat rocking himself slowly, with contented little murmurings of "ook o-o-o raw-w-l!"

"Please git right down an' go back to the farm, Amasa," she pleaded.

The old man whimpered: "Good man; nice corn! I'll go with you!"

"Say!" bellowed the captain, "git down out o' this wagon, you ——! There!" he ejaculated, with a sigh of relief; "there's language understood by everybody from an old shag-back to a Fiji Islander!" He cocked his eye over his shoulder, but the pauper made no move. The sudden fury of a shipboard autocrat, accustomed to implicit obedience, now burst out. The captain dropped a rein, and gave the old man a buffet with his open hand. The ominous noise of the slap and the yell that followed started the horse, and it plunged away down the road. Bodfish was busy with the reins, and was discommoded by the child on his knees.

"Take the whip, Mis' Crummett, an' whale that fool off'n our quarter, there!"

But the whining pauper wailed: "If you hit me ag'in, I'll crow!"

"For massy sakes, don't stir him up into a crowin' spell, Cap'n Bodfish," appealed Oleander. "He'll start out the whol' neighborhood after us. You can hear him all o' tew miles when he crows."

With a groan and a gasp of rage, the

captain held to his reins and gave up the solution of the problem behind him. He had plenty to attend to in the one before him. With the instinct of the livery homing-horse, the hungry beast gripped the bit in his toughened mouth and fled. In the dimness of the night, the apprehensive captain, in his "outlook for rads," seemed to behold barriers and holes continually. He lost his presence of mind, and bawled hoarse "Whoas," and yanked on the reins. There were sudden stoppings and frantic racings. The rush of the night air, the sense of freedom, and the occasional call of a drowsy chanticleer spurred the "human rooster" to reply in kind. He stood up and crowed, his voice swelling into a piercing shriek like a siren whistle. Intoxicated by his own voice, and by the replies that came over the hills from near or distant farms, Amasa made night hideous along the country highways. The captain, bellowing to his horse and to the fool, Oleander screaming appeals to Amasa, and the crying children swelled the uproar. From farmhouse windows tousled heads were thrust to gaze; and long after these clamorous strangers had disappeared over the hills people remained awake to discuss their passage.

With the first streakings of red dawn, the hard-bitted horse came tearing down into the Port through which the captain had hoped to pass stealthily, in order to place the little family on board the Palermo packet. Captain Nymphus had surrendered the child to Oleander, and was "riding on the reins," his feet against the dashboard, his shoulders across the seat back. He was tugging, and sawing, and swearing.

Several men came running out from the shelter of the tavern porch, and two of them caught the horse by the head. After a bit of a dragging scuffle in the dust, they checked the panting beast. The "human rooster" emitted a few more hoarse and gasping crows, and subsided.

"Wal, Cap Nymph," said a man, who advanced and put his foot on the hub of the forewheel, "hain't this kind of a new ventur' for you?" He glanced

humorously at the woman, the children and the old pauper, whom the dawn showed to be decked out with feathers stuck about his faded hat.

"Say, what be ye stoppin' a man in this way for?" the captain demanded. "I'm goin' along 'tendin' to my own bus'ness."

"I'm 'tendin' to mine, too," retorted the man. "I'm dep'ty sheriff here, as I s'pose ye know; an' I've been telefoamed to to arrest one Cap'n Nymphus Bodfish." He winked at the captain, as though the situation had its jocose aspect.

"I ain't done nothin' to be arrested for!" roared Bodfish.

"Town off'cers o' Conham say ye've eloped with a merried pauper, an' stole two children an' a crazy man into the bargain," stated the sheriff. The men who were holding the horse laughed.

"You're a fool!" the captain bellowed.

"Now, now, now! Cap Nymph!"

"Cast off there, you fellows that's holt of my hawser!"

"Now, Cap Nymph, ye might's well understand ye've got to go back to Conham along o' me, an'——"

"Shan't, nuther! I hain't done nothin', I say!"

"Now, Nymph, ye might jest's well go along easy as to take it hard, an' make it hard. Ye know me, an'——"

But the infuriated captain leaped over the wheel and made at the officer, holding the whip-butt marlinspike fashion. It was a Homeric battle, but it was soon over; for half a dozen men piled upon the frantic Bodfish and trussed him like a veal calf bound for market.

"If ye'd ruther go this way than like a gentlemun, take your ch'ice," the deputy sheriff panted. "Ye may be able to slam sailors 'round permiscus, but ye can't lick a Port Quauhaug possey jest yit a while, Cap'n Nymphus Bodfish, E-squire!"

Back over that dusty road, bound and helpless, the captive skipper rode in the same beach wagon, sweating, swearing, pleading and explaining; but the deputy drove on, nursing a black eye, chewing tobacco vigorously, and obdurately refusing to hold discourse.

And at three o'clock that afternoon Captain Bodfish, his legs tied together at the ankle, found himself jammed into a chair, glaring up out of red-rimmed eyes at the Conham trial justice who had adjourned court from his office to grange hall, in order to give the populace opportunity to hear this remarkable case.

"An' now, havin' heard the testimony, what was your idee, Cap'n Nym-phus Bod-fish," drawled the old magistrate, severely, "in runnin' away—e-lopin', as the sayin' is in law—with a merried woman? This case of stealin' a plain, ord'nary pauper we will consider later."

The captain tottered up on his pinioned feet and shrieked invectives until two officers were called to thrust him back and admonish him.

"I wa'n't elopin'," he gasped.

"Appearances all ag'in you," persisted the magistrate. "Here's Mr. Watson Webb, responsible citizen, who says you was hangin' around the town-farm premises, an' flirtin' with the said pauper—carryin' on disgraceful, till he drove you away."

"He's a—a——" The captain choked back his profanity, for the constables menaced him. "Say, look-a-here! you chap on the quarter-deck, there! I didn't come up here to lug off no paupers. If I did happen to pick up a few loose ones, they was what ye might call forced onto me. Now, as to what I did come up here for! I hate to bring in other parties as may not like to be brought in; but if you land piruts can't take the word of an honest seafarin' man, I reckon I can git ye a witness from roundabouts here—leastways, I think it's possible."

Again he stood up, wobbled as he revolved, and gazed on the faces in the room with desperation in his stare. Suddenly his anxious eyes lighted up. He had found the face of Widow Trask, grim and unrelenting.

"Mis' Trypheny Trask," he cried, "you're the only one I can see here who knows me well enough to speak a good word for me. I know 'tain't shipshape to call on ye this way; but I guess your style is like mine—open an' out with it,

sailorman fashion. Mis' Trask, you know I ain't in love with no pauper. You know what I come up here for yistiddy. Don't ye?"

She slowly nodded her head, but her face was inflexible.

"But when I went away from your house, Mis' Trask, I found a poor woman that was bein' kept a slave by a landlubber, an' it's my style to stand up for wimmen-folks. An' there the whol' matter is, Mis' Trask. I know that woman's husband, an' I was takin' her back to him as was vowed to love an' cherish her. Anyone that ain't a fool would understand it!"

He sunk his voice, and would have moved toward her; but the magistrate cried: "No shenanigan with witnesses, Cap'n Bodfish. If you've got anything to say, the court must hear it."

The captain, in the clutch of the constables, stared helplessly at Widow Trask. Then he went on, stammeringly, striving to be secret, desperately endeavoring to put hidden meaning into his hoarse utterance. "You see, Mis' Trypheny, don't ye? 'Bout that I was flirtin', an' all that! He said it! See? It's a plot. Be ye goin' to see it go on? You an' me—remember—you an' me understand why—why I went up into that field, ready to chaw him up. Widder, I jest couldn't help it when that woman told me what she did, an' give me the chanst. What you had said to me made me crazy-headed. You understand! Hey? Awful sizzlin' here!" He slapped his breast. "Widder, you're knowin' to what's behind it. Won't you stand up an'—wal, you know what to say. I've gone onto the shoals. But—but—the idee was that I wa'n't goin' to let him bust up any more what God had j'ined together."

He stood cracking his gnarled knuckles. The widow had at first glared at him uncompromisingly. But his haggard face, his appealing eyes, his unkempt attire, his general appearance of helplessness here among these landmen, evidently touched her heart. She stood up, her cheeks red, her eyes steady.

"Mister Justice," she said, "I want to

see ev'ryone used square. That's my motto. I want to say that Cap'n Bodfish come here from the Port yistiddy to see me, an' he can't be elopin' with paupers very well, 'cause he's"—she threw a long, intense and masterful look into his hungry eyes—"he's goin' to marry me, an' it's been all arranged some time ago. An' that settles that part!"

"That's right, mister," shouted Bodfish; "an' I'm goin' to settle here an'—"

"Cap'n Bodfish was goin' to say," interrupted the widow, calmly, "that he's goin' to settle up my bus'ness here, an' we're goin' to move to Port Quauhaug, where there won't be sech little, narrer-contracted, spiteful souls as don't know that there is men in the world that never sees oppressed an' suff'rin' wimmen without reachin' out to them the hand of chivalry. But, thank God, that's the kind of a husband I'm goin' to have!"

When she took her indignant eyes off the face of Superintendent Watson Webb, that extinguished individual had only breath enough left to ask that Captain Bodfish be mulcted in a sum sufficient to pay for "telefoam an' off'cers' fees."

"Now, Trypheny, tell me how in tophet did ye happen to whopse round so sudden?"

"Well, Nymphus Bodfish, if ever I see a man that needed a wife to straighten him out, an' keep him out o' the trouble that a good an' unsuspecting heart will lead him into, then you was the man as you set there this day. Then, ag'in, I could see that you was ready to giv' in to me—an', like the right kind of a wife, I met ye ha'fway. Now you fill up my woodbox, so's I can go to work and git supper, an' then you giv' yourself a good goin' over at the sink. You're a sight to behold!"

Suddenly her brusque tones softened, a flush dyed her face, her eyes filled, and she lifted her plump form on tiptoe and kissed his brown cheek.

"Oh, I'll bet you're a termenjous good man to wimmen-folks," she whispered.

THE GIRL AT ROBINSON'S

By Mary B. Mullett



OLD on to his feet!"

I was vaguely conscious that Walton was speaking.

"His feet!" echoed an unfamiliar voice.

"He generally kicks,"

Walton explained, from the corner where the washstand was, and I heard the gurgle of water poured into a glass.

That was quite enough to make me sit up like a jack-in-the-box, to the evident alarm of a strange young man, who jumped warily back from the foot of the bed.

"Good-morning," I said, politely. "If you've seen anything of an idiot by the name of Walton, just mention to him that if he brings that water over here I'll make him swallow a quart for every drop he gets on me."

Walton laughed and came over to the bed, glass in hand. The two of us had hobnobbed through a wild course at the Beaux Arts, and had long ago learned the vanity of ceremony.

"If you do!" I threatened.

"Then get up and come out to Robinson's with Baxter and me."

He indicated Baxter with his thumb, and I bowed.

"Good-morning," I said again; but Walton interrupted.

"It isn't morning. It's one o'clock, and there's a train at one-thirty-eight; so please move a little faster, or——"

The pause was significant, and the water was uncommonly wet-looking; so, with a discretion for which I afterward thanked my lucky stars, I tumbled out.

It was a Sunday afternoon in May—a cobalt blue sky overhead where a few plump white clouds hung motionless, as

if they hated to tear themselves away. I didn't blame them. The houses made a long, creamy façade; the air was crisp with sunshine and with the snap and life of all the happy people who were out in it.

As we walked up the street, under the white-flowered chestnuts, with bare-kneed children babbling French all about us—which is almost the prettiest thing in the world in the way of human speech—I realized that it was, perhaps, the last May I might spend in Paris for years; and I, too, could have hung over the old town like the laziest little fat cloud that ever got stuck in mid-sky.

Walton was most conscientious about feeding information to his friend, who had been a boyhood chum, or some one of that variety of chastened blessings; so I let him do all the work. I just gulped great breaths of spring air, till it was a marvel I didn't float; wondering all the time why the devil I had stayed up all night, drifting from the Café Rouge—Touche and his youngsters had played divinely, though—up to the Bullier, and back to the Brasserie d'Harcourt, and so on, until broad daylight had sent me to bed.

Whatever Baxter might be—and he didn't seem particularly promising—I was grateful to him and to Walton for getting me out. I went so far as to show him how to ride first-class on third-class tickets—one of our favorite amusements over there—and when we were settled in the train I gave him a cigarette. As the tobacco was French, and Baxter was new in Paris, he did not show any inordinate gratitude for the attention, but I meant well.

"What is this Rubb-ann-sones?" he

asked, after a rueful whiff at the cigarette. As for his French accent, it should have paid duty.

"In plain English, Robinson's," I explained. "Paris edition of 'Swiss Family.' Big, old trees; winding stairs around trunks; two, three platforms, one above another, in each tree; kitchens on ground near by; a monsieur, a madame and their children eat dinner on one platform; a student and his *Mimi* on another platform; we, if we have luck, dine on the top one. There you are! Good, bad and indifferent in conjunction, and nobody the worse for it. Imagine it at—Philadelphia!"

Baxter—who, it appeared, had been keeping books in his father's foundry—looked at me about as comprehendingly as one of their bars of pig iron would have looked, and seemed open to further explanations. But just then we ran by the drifts of blossoms where the gardens of Sceaux climb along the slopes, and I left Baxter to Walton, and Walton to his fate.

When we clattered up to our station we got off with the crowd. But Baxter wanted to examine the rails, and to see what the ties were made of, and to calculate the resistance of the brakes, and to invent a new guard rail; so we were behind the rest when we finally strolled up through the little village toward the chestnut grove, which was buzzing like a great hive with a cheerful medley of sounds.

Ahead of us the crowd straggled roomily along in the middle of the street, and we followed suit. America hasn't a monopoly of real freedom. One has to go to Europe to achieve that wholesome contempt for sidewalks which makes one regard them merely as insignificant selvages along the edge of the real thing.

So we spread all over the street; and, when a donkey cavalcade ambled down among us, we scattered, but didn't mind. Fat women, on absurdly small donkeys, laughed till they rolled in their saddles. Middle-aged *pères de familles*, long legs clapped to the sides of the little, gray beasts, shouted indiscriminately to *maman*, to the children bumping peril-

ously along, and to the malevolent-eyed donkeys.

We laughed and shouted with the rest, bought *papier-maché* trumpets, through which we blew hideously, and we should have danced in every one of the half-dozen pavilions if the pangs of hunger had not reminded me that it was the middle of the afternoon, and I hadn't even smelled my breakfast yet.

"You see that big tree?" I said to Baxter, who was unexpectedly warming up to the occasion. "That's the best tree there is. Best view from the platform, best waiter, best wine. We'll have a bit of something to eat, and engage the platform for dinner."

"There's somebody up there now," said Walton.

I looked up toward the third floor, and there, sure enough, was a glimpse of a woman's hat.

"Eugène," I called to the waiter, who at that moment came fluttering down the winding stair.

"Ah, gentlemen, good-morning, good-morning!"

He bowed, and flourished, and smiled; but I knew Eugène of old, and I saw very clearly that he had something on his mind, and that joy at seeing us was *not* that something.

"Is there someone on the third, Eugène?"

"But yes, monsieur."

"And on the second?"

"But, yes—thousand pardons, monsieur!"

"Well, look here, Eugène. We'll take a little bit of something on the first now, but we want the third for six o'clock dinner. Now, you needn't say it's engaged. I engaged it last week. You had quite forgotten it until I came, but you recall it now, don't you, my friend?"

But Eugène's memory, which hitherto had been easily molded by a judicious—or injudicious, if you please—application of franc pieces, absolutely refused to be impressed as I wanted it. He shook his head—apologetically, to be sure, and uncertainly; still, he did shake it.

"A thousand pardons, monsieur, but the third is engaged—indefinitely. If it

should be free at six o'clock, we should be enchanted to have you gentlemen; but——"

And so, with much grumbling, I led the way to the first floor, where Eugène made a great affair of seating us at table, and was extravagantly deferential about our order.

"And what will the gentlemen have? An omelette? Yes? A salad? Yes? And for wine? A good, red Bordeaux? Exactly. And then a little Brie cheese? And some preserves? Yes? And then—coffee? Good! In one little minute, gentlemen."

He frisked out directly with a tablecloth, which he laid for us. Next he came flashing across the patches of sunlight with a load of dishes and silver, which he deposited in a basket at the foot of our tree. A rope from this basket went up over a pulley above the topmost platform, the loose end dangling almost to the ground. Eugène ran up to our perch, grasped the loose rope, which hung within easy reach, and pulled the basket up to the level of the railing. Then he drew it in, and set the table from the contents.

It was all new to Baxter, who gaped with interest, and hung so persistently over the balustrade that I thought he might as well be made useful.

"When Eugène puts the omelette in the basket," I said, after that worthy had returned to the kitchen, "you might pull it up. We generally do that for him. It saves time, and I'm so hungry I could eat the plates."

In a shorter time than I had expected, Baxter began to heave away on the rope, and I jumped up to help him land the basket. At the same moment Eugène frisked airily by on one of his periodical upward flights, but I paid no attention to him.

"*Mon Dieu!*" I exclaimed, as I lifted out a diminutive omelette. "Does he think that three husky Americans are going to divide that dab among them? And the wine! A half bottle! And white, at that! What's the matter with the fellow, anyway?"

Just then came the pit-pat, pit-pat of Eugène's flying steps, and he landed,

breathless with excitement, on our platform.

"Pardon, gentlemen, pardon! But you have taken the omelette for the third floor!"

"Well," I said, "considering the size of the omelette, the third floor is welcome to its own. Present it, Eugène, with the assurance that it is garnished with our apologies. I hope they're not very hungry," I added.

"It is for a lady," explained Eugène, one foot on the stairs. "An *old* lady," over his shoulder.

Our own omelette arrived very soon, and was hauled up by the assiduous Baxter. We made short work of it, hungry as we were, and were tooting through the red and green trumpets for Eugène when the ropes were seen to move. Baxter reconnoitered.

"There's salad in the basket," he reported.

"Ah! that's ours!" I declared. "Heave ho! with the salad!"

We had just begun to serve the crisp chicory when pit-pat, pit-pat! the breathless Eugène once more.

"But, gentlemen, wait, wait! It is the salad of the third floor!"

"Now, Eugène!" I protested. "That's not a proper salad for an old lady. One needs all one's teeth—and more, too—for a chicory salad."

But Eugène carried it off, and not until our own bowl came, twice as big, were we appeased.

When Baxter announced a third installment in the basket, Walton and I took pains to investigate personally.

"It's a Brie, all right enough," said Walton. "And preserves, too."

"That *must* be ours," I declared, and hauled it up, only to hear Eugène's plaintive protest behind me.

"*Monsieur!* It is not kind of you to do like this. The lady will be very angry."

"But, Eugène, all that cheese and preserves for one old lady! She'll make herself sick if she eats that all by herself."

"Is it that I said she was all by herself?"

"N-no."

"You ought to see the old gentleman!" said Eugène, taking the cheese. "And their daughter!" capturing the preserves. "Two daughters!" disappearing up the stairs.

We were all somewhat abashed for a minute or two, and then Walton and Baxter began to shoulder the responsibility onto me.

"All right," I said, at last, "if it was my fault I'll go up and apologize. Eugène has probably told them we are 'Yankees,' and I'm not going to have them wagging their heads and saying it is just like the 'Yankee pigs.' They're a plain, bourgeois family. I know the kind. If we let it go, they'll have a grouch against America all the rest of their days. But if I go up and apologize prettily—reserve those hoots of scorn, Walton; I can do it—they'll believe that America is the home of all the virtues. For the sake of my country, *au revoir!*" and I started up the stairs.

One of the frankly-loving couples which enliven every Paris gathering was cooing and kissing on the second platform, quite undisturbed by the presence of Eugène, who was clearing their table. I was halfway to the top floor when he happened to catch sight of me. Immediately, with a despairing cry, he clashed the dishes upon the table.

"Stop, *monsieur!*"

I stopped. I was at that point on the stairway where my head was on a level with the third platform; and, while he clutched at my ankles and stammered incoherently below me, there was a cry of surprise from above, and I looked up.

In a flash Eugène, the disturbed lovers, Walton, Baxter, Paris itself—all were forgotten. I shut my eyes in sheer distrust of my own vision; then opened them as if to order them to try again.

"Tommy!" I said, under my breath.

"Dan!"

I kicked loose from Eugène's fierce, detaining hands, and left him stuttering with wrath and dismay.

"It is you!" I exclaimed, taking both her hands. "And yet they say the age of miracles is over. Where did you come from, and how—"

Eugène appeared at the top of the

stairs. Too far gone even for stuttering, he stared open-mouthed.

"It's all right, Eugène," I said. "You have assisted at a miracle. They're out of fashion; but never mind, I like them. Mademoiselle and I have known each other—how many years is it, Tommy, since I 'rode' you home on my sled? You may go, Eugène. Wait a minute."

I transferred to his convenient palm a tip whose size, in the light of Eugène's previous experience with me, must have convinced him that it was a day of more than one miracle.

"Tell the gentlemen down below that—that—let me see! Tell them that the lady up here is an old French teacher of mine—true, isn't it, Tommy?—and for them not to wait. And," I added, in an undertone, "if you let anyone else up here, I'll *assassinate* you!"

Eugène fled; and, taking a deep breath, I turned around, half fearing that it all had been an illusion, and that Tommy—as I had long ago christened little Mary Thomas—was thousands of miles away, an ocean and an old quarrel between us.

But no! There she stood, the young, green leaves whispering above her head and, beyond her, the far, faint amethyst of the horizon where the hills shut in the valley of the Bièvre. She wore something light and soft, and her hat was all green leaves with little flowers glinting through them, as if she were a modern dryad, at home in her tree-top.

I don't know how long I stood staring at her, at the soft, deep blue of her eyes and the exquisite wavering pink and white of her cheeks. When I looked at her I felt as if the years since I had seen her had been one long famine of the eyes.

She flushed deliciously under my gaze, and there was a sort of appealing, "caught" look in her face which took me back through the years. It was six since we had quarreled. (A boy of nineteen can be a fool without half trying.) Six since we had quarreled, sixteen since I had taken home on my sled the little girl who lived in the next block. (A boy of nine sometimes displays a wisdom beyond his years.) I looked now at that

little girl grown older, and suddenly I found that my heart was thumping—madly!

"I suppose," faltered Tommy, nervously creasing the tablecloth between her fingers, of which I had reluctantly let go—"I suppose you want to know—how I happen to be—to be—up this particular kind of a tree."

"Why, yes," I said; though what I *really* wanted to know was something quite different.

"It's awfully queer, I suppose, my being up in a tree—all alone—away off here," and there was a little quiver in her voice.

"Queer?" I said, with a large air of dismissal. "Not at all."

"Oh, I know it is! I know what you must think!"

Said I to myself: "I only wish you did!"

"You are horrified."

"Well, that isn't the way I pronounce it."

She looked up then, and it is a positive fact that just one little smidge of a look was all she needed. She knew as quickly as that what I was thinking, and there was the prettiest sort of change in the very tension of her slender figure—a kind of relaxing and recovering, as if her heart had been shrinking from a hurt, but was all right again.

"If it is three o'clock," she said, demurely, "would you mind helping me watch for two wild-eyed Americans, who look as if they had lost their hopes of heaven?"

"I've just *found* my hope of——"

"One is my aunt," she interrupted, somewhat hastily. "Aunt Clara. You've never seen her——"

"And don't want to see her!" I declared, turning my back on the road and offering Tommy a seat where she could neither see nor be seen.

"They'll be worried to death about me."

"It won't be an easy way for them to die," I admitted, "but they deserve it. Why did they lose you?"

"They didn't. I lost them. We were late at the station, and had to make a run for the train. I got on. But Aunt

Clara, who isn't built for speed, was left at the post, and Mr. Talcott, who was trying to help her, was left, too."

"I feel as if I could love Talcott," I said, devoutly.

"I tried to get out of the compartment," Tommy proceeded, ignoring my remark, "but the guard held the door shut. All I could get was a backward vision of Aunt Clara, looking like Canute in petticoats, trying to make the train stop by telling it to. It didn't. So I sat down and tried to think what to do. I knew there would be another train in less than an hour, so I concluded that they would come on that train. I——" Tommy began creasing the tablecloth again. "Of course, I might have stayed down in the station all this time; but people would have stared at me, wouldn't they?"

"I believe," said I, thinking how like a flower she seemed in that land of dark women, "I believe we may safely assume that they would have stared."

"Anyway," she went on, "I had been out here when I was in Paris five years ago, and I knew how nice it was up in these lovely, big trees. So I hopped off the train before it had fairly stopped, rushed up here, got this top platform where nobody could see me, and—and you know the rest. If it's three o'clock now that train is in, and it's time to watch for Aunt Clara and Mr. Talcott."

"Tommy," I protested, "do you think I've waited six years to share you with any Aunt Claras and Talcotts?"

"There's only one of each," she remarked. "And, anyway, the last time I saw you I was distinctly informed that you never wanted to see me again, under any circumstances."

"Can you ever forgive me?" I demanded, rather absently, I'm afraid; for the flutter of the leaves overhead made little, twinkling lights go dancing over her hat, and once in a while they slipped over the brim and fell upon her lips as if they kissed them. It was the most tantalizing spectacle. I caught myself making a ridiculous motion with my own lips, as if——

"Do you think you can ever forgive me?" I repeated, with abrupt fervor.

"Perhaps I will, if you'll let the waiter up now with the coffee," she laughed, and I got out of Eugène's way.

"The gentlemen ask if monsieur will not descend soon," he said, and his eyes were warning signals.

"Monsieur will descend immediately," I announced, with decision, and went down, two steps at a time. I was none too soon, either, for Baxter was fuming.

"We thought you were going to stay all day!" he complained.

"I told Eugène to tell you not to wait for me. Didn't he say so?"

"Oh, he said so, all right," Walton assured me; "but Baxter——"

"The lady," I interrupted, "turns out to be a French teacher I had when I was a boy. I was devoted to her, and—and she was to me. Of course," with some heat, "I can scarcely be expected to give her any ten minutes after all these years."

"Even by Baxter," I wanted to add, but restrained myself. Perhaps I had the grace to blush over my reference to Tommy's "devotion." At any rate, Baxter eyed me suspiciously.

"What about the daughters?" he demanded.

"The daughters!" I echoed, and my effort to recall them was so evidently sincere that he was reassured.

"Little sticks," I declared; and quite truthfully, too, for the only occupants of the third floor, aside from Tommy, were a few twigs.

"Well, Dan," said Walton, roused to an unusual degree of expostulation by Baxter's open disapproval, "it strikes me you might do better with an afternoon like this than to make an offering of it to some fat old French woman."

"Well, I can't come now," I said, stubbornly.

Tingling with impatience, I saw them safely started at last, and ran back up the stairs.

"Have they gone?" whispered Tommy.

"Yes; but you'd better keep out of sight, unless you can manage to look like an elderly Frenchman, his wife, and two daughters."

"Am I all that?"

"Thanks to Eugène, yes."

"It seems almost too much for the money. I gave him all I could spare, but it was only five francs."

"Only five francs! I wonder at Eugène. He ought to have made four generations of you, to say the least."

"It must have been bad enough, as it was, to find a solitary American girl when you had been led to expect an entire French family. But cheer up!" as I showed signs of a willingness to tell how I did like the exchange; "Aunt Clara is due. Please look, Dan, and see if there's a stout woman——"

"There are at least a hundred," I said, easily.

"—accompanied by a tall, distinguished-looking gentleman," she finished, with ostentatious emphasis.

"No such creature in sight!" I declared. "There goes Walton, but you'd either have to stretch your imagination or to stretch Walton if you wanted to call him tall. As for Baxter, he's tall enough, but——"

"Baxter!" exclaimed Tommy; and there was something in her tone which made me turn around. "Not Fernando Baxter?"

"I don't know. He seemed capable of it. All I know of him is that when he came to Paris he got out of his element, which was pig iron."

"Pig iron!" said Tommy. "Then it is Fernando!"

"Did—do—do you want to see him?" I asked, reluctantly.

"No!" with a grimace of dismay. "That's the last thing I want. Dan, you simply must find Aunt Clara!"

"All right, Tommy. Don't worry. Just keep back out of sight and I'll fix things all right."

"I'm mighty glad there's somebody to fix things. They need it."

"You couldn't be glad that the somebody happens to be me?" I asked, with more feeling than grammar.

"Awfully glad!" with a fervor which lost a good deal of its effect by the promptness with which she added: "But please go and find Aunt Clara, before Fernando does."

Down in the crowd, I soon found that

the train had been in over a quarter of an hour. As stout American dames are exceedingly uncommon at Robinson's, I knew I should be pretty safe in concluding that anyone answering to that seemingly meager description could be safely counted upon to be Tommy's missing aunt.

At a distance I saw Walton and Baxter, but I carefully avoided being seen by them. For five minutes I explored the place, taking it from points of vantage which I knew to command the most frequented parts; but I could not help a secret feeling of pleasure when no Aunt Clara turned up as the doubtful reward of my search. I might have hunted farther afield, but a plan of action had occurred to me which needed to be submitted at once to Tommy. So, carefully reconnoitering the movements of Walton and Baxter, and finding, with satisfaction, that they were just entering one of the dancing pavilions, I hurried back to our tree.

"Aunt Clara isn't here," I announced, in reply to Tommy's eager question. "Evidently they did not come. But there's no time to lose. Walton and Baxter are in one of the pavilions. Now is our time to slip away. We can't go to the station. To do that we would have to pass close to them. But we can walk out in the other direction, and, if you are good for a rather long jaunt, fetch around by a charming road that I know to the next station. Will you come? They may be back here at any moment after me, and they are *sure* to come at six o'clock—probably earlier."

Tommy's blue eyes were wide and startled, as she considered a moment. Then the old love of an escapade leaped in them, and I turned and ran down the stairs, knowing that she would follow. In three minutes we were out of sight of the crowded center of the grove, and were taking it easily along the highway.

Groups of strollers were going and coming; the donkey cavalcades were jouncing back and forth; the sky was still blue, the clouds lazy with content, the air full of laughter and the high, pretty sing-song of French. It had been delightful even before the miracle hap-

pened which added Tommy to the ensemble. Now it was the most wonderful day that ever shone. I looked down at her, and we laughed like two children. "Talk about hopes of heaven!" I said. "This *is* heaven."

"Do you think so? I always knew there'd be some donkeys in heaven, but I wasn't expecting just that kind," pointing to the road.

She looked so adorably pretty that I wasn't surprised to hear a voice from the passing cavalcade:

"Look at that pretty English girl! *Mon Dieu!* If there are others like her in England, I would invade it all alone!"

Tommy blushed and bent her head so that I could see only the peeping flowers on her hat. But they winked companionably at me through the leaves.

And so we went on, gradually leaving behind us most of the strolling groups. There were woods at our left, threaded with shady paths, but I knew we had a long detour ahead of us, so kept to the main road for the present, merely glancing back occasionally to be sure that our retreat had not been discovered. It was when these backward glances had become only a matter of form that I saw something which made me look again, and sharply. In the distance two donkeys were coming at a gallop; and I, who had assisted tolerably often at similar jaunts with Walton, needed only a second glance to make me seize Tommy by the hand and hurry her into the shelter of the nearest woodpath.

"It's Walton and Baxter," I explained.

Hand in hand, we stole behind a thick growth of bushes and watched the two Americans go by, Walton giving "chaff" for "chaff" to the French, and Baxter supplying his lingual deficiencies by throwing kisses to the prettiest girls. Tommy's mouth pursed itself into a round O of astonishment.

"Well, *did* you see that?" she demanded.

"Tut, tut, Fernando!" I remarked, piously.

Tommy softly clapped her hands and laughed gleefully to herself, but I had no chance to ask the cause of her evident

satisfaction. Walton and Baxter pulled up the donkeys a hundred feet or so beyond where we were hiding, and, after engaging a small boy to hold the beasts, struck off through the woods. Tommy looked up inquiringly.

"There's a brook at the foot of the hill," I said—"a pretty little ravine. They'll be back in five or ten minutes."

In a flash we looked meaningfully at each other—the old Tommy and the old Dan, skylarking together through their 'teens.

"Could you?" I asked.

She eyed the donkeys with a considering glance.

"You used to," I reflected, "but, of course, now——"

"Come on!" she commanded, giving her head the old, proud, won't-take-a-dare toss, and we sped among the trees to the path along which my unsuspecting friends had disappeared. Then, discreetly regaining the road, we approached the guardian of the donkeys, and I truthfully stated that the young men had gone on, and that we would take the donkeys back.

If the boy had been inclined to question our authority, his doubt disappeared at the sight of a franc, and Tommy promptly selected her donkey. I threw one stirrup over its back, just as I always did when she rode my pony; and, when I gave her a hand up, she seemed just as wondrously light as she used to when I was a hulking lad of fifteen and she one of these astonishing little girls who seem, somehow, to defy the law of gravity, and to resist, rather, some skyward-tending force not felt by commoner mortals.

I never should have expected any other girl to keep her seat on that donkey, as we galloped back to the grove. But I had played ringmaster in the old days to Tommy's "Bellita, the Equestrian Marvel," and I was reasonably hopeful. She justified my confidence in her, and we did not dismount until we were back in the crowd again. Then I took the donkeys to their owner, paid him hurriedly, and rejoined Tommy.

"Now, then," I said, looking at my watch, "they'll be on our heels pretty

soon. There's only one thing to be done. There should be a train back to Paris about this time, and if we can catch that we'll be safe."

"Isn't it exciting?" laughed Tommy. "There's almost as much doing as there is in an historical novel. The villain still pursues us. Oh, *did* you see Fernando throwing kisses? I'd almost like to stay and confront him—only I'd have to be confronted myself, wouldn't I?"

So we hurried off down the street and arrived, breathless with laughter and excitement, at the station.

"Safe!" exclaimed Tommy. "Also, hot!"

She pulled off her gloves, and extracted a handkerchief from some mysterious fold of her gown. Then, as she made pretty little dabs at her flushed face and I stood watching her, my heart in my eyes, I saw the flash of a ring on her left hand—a glowing ruby, throbbing between two diamonds.

Did I say that my heart was in my eyes? Well, I had no idea there could be such rapid transit from one's eyes to one's boots.

"What is the matter?" demanded Tommy. "You look——"

Then she saw where my eyes rested, and, with an embarrassed laugh, she covered the ring with her hand.

"What is that, Tommy?"

I could not help the sternness of the question any more than I could help the question itself.

"Is it an engagement ring, Tommy?"

"Yes," after a pause.

I turned abruptly and walked to the door, staring at the opposite waiting room and beating the wings of my desire against the cage where it suddenly found itself prisoned. Then I went heavily back, and sat down beside her.

"Do I know him?" I asked, mechanically.

"Slightly, I believe. At least, you've met him. It's Fernando Baxter."

"Baxter!" I cried. "Good Lord, Tommy! Why, you said—I thought——"

She put her head back against the wall and laughed, while I stared at her, hopelessly puzzled.

"Want to be told?" she asked.

It was a phrase from the old days together, and somehow it put hope into me.

"Yep," I replied, again as of old.

"Well— By the way," she interrupted herself, "isn't it a stunning ring?"

"Yes," I admitted.

"Real pigeon-blood color," as she eyed the ruby affectionately.

"Yes," grudgingly.

"Cost—"

I opened my eyes.

"Fifteen francs!"

I opened my mouth. Then:

"Tommy!" I exclaimed. "You little fraud!"

"Yes; Rue de Rivoli. And you thought it was Rue de la Paix! I'll never take your judgment in precious stones, Dan."

"Then I'll let *you* pick them out. Why did you say it was an engagement ring?"

"Because it is."

"To that prig."

"You forget the neatness and dispatch with which Fernando threw those kisses. Oh, Dan! you don't know how glad I was to see that nice little evidence of human weakness. Fernando is the worst gossip that a good but—well, inscrutable—Providence ever permitted to live. And he—Fernando—knows simply rafts of people at home. But if he finds out how I have spent this afternoon, why"—she nodded her little head sagely—"I certainly am glad not to have missed those kisses."

"But, Tommy," I persisted, "it can't be an engagement ring."

"Oh, yes, it can!" eying it, but with evident animosity. "Aunt Clara has one, too. A beautiful sapphire and diamonds. Price, twenty-five francs. And mine only fifteen! Don't you think

that's encouraging age and stoutness? Fernando was with us the other day, and he and Aunt Clara got the rings—it's their idea of a joke—to celebrate our engagement to dine with him at Voisin's to-morrow."

"Oh, you blessed girl!" I began; and there's no telling where I should have stopped, but she made a gesture of protest.

"Not here, Dan!"

When the warning bell rang, as it did in a few minutes, we went out on the platform. Thanking the merciful Providence which prompts the French people to travel in the economical third class, I found an empty first-class compartment for ourselves, and shut its door against intruders. As we pulled out of the station, I took Tommy's hand and drew off the engagement ring of Fernando.

"May I?" I asked; and, with the permission of her eyes, I tossed the ring out of the window.

"To-morrow," I said, and this time my gratitude may have missed Providence, being directed at the generous "guvnor" at home, whose estimate of my final expenses in Paris had been as big as his dear old heart, "to-morrow, Tommy, will you go with me to the Rue de la Paix and pick out a ring which will engage you to dine with me as long as we live?"

"Well—since you leave me free in the matter of breakfast and luncheon," said Tommy.

After a while she looked up—from my shoulder—and laughed.

"First you stole my luncheon; next you stole the donkeys; then you stole my ring; and now—"

"I'll reform now," I said, "for I've the dearest thing in all the world now, and there's nothing else I want."



The Defeat of Lady Hartridge

By E. F. Benson

Author of "Dodo," "The Relentless City," Etc.



HE *Celtic* was to sail in an hour's time from the pier of the White Star Line in New York harbor, and the huge decks were dotted over with little groups of travelers and the friends who had come to see them off. Out on the river, ferry-boats splashed, churned and hooted, and the great sky-scraping buildings so dear to the commercial sentiment of America that it believes them, with a sort of mother's partiality for a child, to be beautiful, stood up in the hard, clear atmosphere, typical and characteristic. Characteristic, too, was the unhurrying, unceasing bustle with which the mail bags were passed into the ship—everyone concerned with the operation was in exactly his right place, and did swiftly and smoothly what he had to do. And immensely, blatantly characteristic was Mrs. Cyrus S. Vane as she made her hospitable farewell speeches to the Hartridges, who had been her guests on her immense steam yacht during the processions of the *Defender* and the *Shamrock*, and, for the last week, up at her "cottage" in Newport. She spoke in a shrill, piercing voice, audible without effort above the pounding of the donkey engine.

"Well, Lady Hartridge," she shrieked, "I'm sorry, I'm real sorry, you're going. I guess you're the loveliest woman I ever saw; and it's been just too sweet having you with us, and it's too bad of you to go home so soon. Why, when we get hold of people like you, we want you to stop as many months as you've stopped minutes. It seems just yesterday that Cyrus and I came down to

meet you. And you'll come back. You promised that; and, if Cyrus and I are at San Francisco, we'll come to meet you."

Lady Hartridge, to do her justice, had been extremely unwilling to come to America at all. But, having come, like the sensible woman she undoubtedly was, she made the best of it. And there was a good deal put at her disposal; for, in her honor, Mrs. Cyrus S. Vane had assembled day after day at the cottage absolutely all that was considered brightest and best in the Western civilization. Dinner parties, fêtes of the most extravagant and ingenious kind, balls, bridge parties had succeeded each other without intermission, and Lady Hartridge had eaten, drunk, danced, laughed and won money with bewildering rapidity; and, being a woman of the world, she had made herself perfectly charming and immensely popular. All the same, she inwardly vowed fifty times a day that never, under any circumstances, would she set foot on this continent again. She would throw herself from the top deck of the *Celtic* first, into the less objectionable depths of the Atlantic. And now, at the moment of their departure, she laid herself out for the last time to be pleasant.

"Dearest Elizabeth," she said, "I told you quite distinctly this morning that if you called me Lady Hartridge I should not answer you. Mabel—yes, that's it. Now, you've been quite too charming and kind to us for words, and, as I am an extremely greedy person—as you have probably found out by this time—I'm going to ask one thing more of you, and insist on getting it. When-

ever you come to England, let me know; I insist on that. And, wherever we are, you must come and stay with us; I insist on that, too. Dear me! how I have enjoyed myself! Tell everybody that my heart is cut up into about three thousand separate little pieces and sent round, like wedding cake, to all their houses. I keep just one piece, the smallest of all, for Tit-bits. Where is Tit-bits? Come here at once. Elizabeth is going."

Tit-bits was her husband—a huge, blond, contented man, who, by the side of his wife, looked like a big retriever taking care of a beribboned Yorkshire terrier. He was so called because of the amazing quantity of scrappy information with which his mind was stored. At this moment he was engaged in acquiring more concerning the construction of steel frames for houses from an American architect who was crossing with them.

"Well, it is too sad, Mrs. Vane," he said. "We've both enjoyed ourselves enormously. And Mrs. Vane is coming to us—eh, Mabel? Quite so. Good-by, and thank you a thousand times. Let me see you down. Over twenty-one thousand tons, this ship. Marvelous, isn't it? And seven hundred and five feet long."

The bell had already warned all but passengers ashore, and soon after the huge bulk of the ship began mysteriously and silently to slide out into the river, with solemn and raucous hoots and howlings. Lady Hartridge, consistent to the last, waved a tiny handkerchief in the direction of Mrs. Vane, and even made believe to mop her eyes with it, till the ship swung round. Then she turned to her husband.

"Tit-bits, I have survived," she said. "That is all, literally all, that can be said. I shall now go to my cabin—I beg its pardon, my stateroom—and sleep for three days. See the steward, or whoever it is, at once, please, and arrange that no American shall sit within six paces on either side of me at dinner."

It was mid-May, some nine months after the shores of the West had faded

from Mabel Hartridge's unappreciative eyes, and she was sitting in her drawing room in Bruton Street, discussing a certain question with her husband, and disagreeing with him. She held a long, closely-written letter in her hands, which she suddenly crumpled up and threw into the waste-paper basket.

"It is perfectly impossible," she said, "and I absolutely refuse to do it. If we take in her and her husband, it will leave only one spare bedroom in the house. Besides, nobody has people to stay with them in London. It isn't done. Think what a frightful nuisance it would be! People from elsewhere stay in hotels. That is what hotels are for."

"Then what is the point of having even one spare room?" asked Tit-bits, rather pertinently. The question was so pertinent, in fact, that it seemed to his wife to be almost impertinent, extremes meeting. So she disregarded it, and went on with what she was saying.

"*Ces gens-la* have no sense of moral geography," she exclaimed, impatiently. "Because we stay with them at their horrible Newport, there is no reason why they should stay with us in London. One talks to, one is intimate with, people abroad one would cut dead here—consuls, P. and O. captains, all sorts of people."

The wholesome and honest retriever was perplexed and distressed at this yapping.

"But you asked them to come," he said; "you pressed it; you insisted on it."

"In New York. That is exactly what I am saying. I used modes of expression suitable to foreign countries. Of course, I will be nice to them; ask them to luncheon or dinner. But stay here—no. They are coming to London on June 15th, they say."

She took up her engagement book and turned the leaves rapidly over.

"We're not doing anything that night," she said. "Ah, yes; there's the ball at Hampshire House—Gladys' swan song, she calls it—for they simply can't afford to keep it open even for the rest of the season. I'm sure she will let me ask

them; it doesn't matter who is at a ball. And they shall dine here first, and lunch the next day. That will be delightful for them, and it always looks so hospitable to ask people to two things—three, in fact—all in one note. I will write to them now. What is the address? Oh, yes; Windermere Hotel. And they are going on to Stratford-on-Avon, Boscastle and Stonehenge—all the places that nobody but an American would ever think of going to."

Tit-bits walked up and down the room jingling the coins in his pockets.

"I don't like it, Mabel," he said. "You ought to ask them to stay. We were their guests for nearly a month. If not here, at any rate for a Saturday till Monday."

"My dear, don't quarter-deck about the room like that. It gets on my nerves. We are engaged or have our own party made up for every Saturday to Monday till the end of July."

"But they made all sorts of arrangements for us—"

"At Newport. Besides, you are a lord and I am a lady. If we had been Mr. and Mrs. Smith, do you think they would have?"

Tit-bits shook his head.

"That's rather beastly of you, Mabel," he said.

"But true."

"Well, Scotland, then?"

Mabel looked up at him with renewed impatience.

"Mrs. Cyrus S. Vane cast on my hands from morning to night on a wet day!" she said. "Thank you very much. Besides, they will probably have left long before. Please go away; I have a hundred things to do."

Mabel was an adept at finished insincerity, and the note to Mrs. Vane was quotable.

"DEAREST ELIZABETH: How quite too unkind of you not to have let me know before that you were in England! I shall not forgive you till I see you, and then I shan't be able to help it. Tit-bits, too, is *furious* with you. My dear, what with country cousins, and all the silly fuss of a London season and this poky little house of ours, we haven't an inch. But you must, you literally must, dine with us on your first night, the fifteenth, come

with me to the dance at Hampshire House—people are tearing each other's eyes out to get an invitation—and lunch with us next day to talk over all the frights of London. Longing to see you, yours affectionately,

"MABEL HARTRIDGE."

This letter reached the Windermere Hotel as the Vanes were breakfasting. "Dearest Elizabeth" read it through twice.

"Well, I'm sure," she said, "she don't want us, and that's what it is, Cyrus."

Then she laughed.

"Ball at Hampshire House!" she said. "Why, if that doesn't tickle me to death! She treated Bertie Vandercrup like that when he was over last fall."

Cyrus read the note his wife passed him, and took a telegraph form.

"Many regrets; otherwise engaged," he wrote on it. Thus the finish, though not the insincerity, of Lady Hartridge was lost on people of such brutal directness.

The season was by now at its height; it had warmed up and got thoroughly going, and had not as yet lost its freshness, and Mabel Hartridge went meteor-like and brilliant on her way. She was one of the real thorough-going Londoners, and hurried unceasingly from one house to another, never pausing to think, content merely to be present at, whether it amused her or not, every social function that could be crammed into the day. In spite of the "pokiness" of her house, she entertained also largely herself, and probably no name in London occurred so frequently in the lists of parties, no costumes were so often described as being seen in the park, as hers. This to her spelled social distinction.

But by slow and gradual degrees, while the Vanes were engaged on their round of visits to wholly impossible places, misgivings began to cross her mind. Somehow the Vanes were in the air; people talked about them, about their amazing wealth; it was said that they were going to settle in London for the last six weeks of the season, and were negotiating for a house. And as the middle of June approached, these misgivings became less vague, but far

more unpleasant. Two or three times it happened that people mentioned they were going to the Vanes' party at the Carlton on the twentieth; and, in a sort of defiance rather than defense, Mabel, who had received no personal intimation of any such party, began to allude to "those dreadful friends of Tit-bits, whom we stayed with at Newport. My dear, quite impossible; I nearly died of them."

Then they came.

They had taken, it appeared, nearly a floor at the Carlton; and, without pause for survey or reconnoitering, Mrs. Cyrus began the siege of London. Singers, dancers, actors, pianists, performing dogs, fortune tellers and acrobats—all that there was of entertaining talent in London was spread in bewildering profusion before her guests. And London, like a school of gulls over a shoal of herrings, fluttered, flocked and was fed. More terrible than that, all sorts of people, even those in Mabel's immediate set, found Mrs. Cyrus too delicious for words. They enjoyed her hospitality, and they genuinely liked her great good nature and her evident and enormous power of enjoyment. And the cream of the thing, almost, was the situation as it concerned dearest Mabel. For dearest Mabel, according to her account, had refused to go near Tit-bits' awful friends; while Tit-bits' awful friends, according to their account, had not asked her. Already she had the worst of it, for, while it was clear from what she herself said that there was war going on, Mrs. Vane, it appeared, was quite unconscious of the war. Lady Hart-ridge, in fact, was belaboring someone who did not feel the rain of blows at all.

Things were in this state when, one morning, Gladys Hampshire descended on Mabel in a perfect hurricane of excitement and exultation.

"Darling, I had to rush and tell you," she cried. "At last we've let Hampshire House! Those dear, angelic people—oh, I forgot; you don't like them!—anyhow, they have taken it for a year, simply at our own price. Hampshire didn't breathe a word of it to anybody till it was all settled, for fear of dis-

appointing me. So, instead of living like starving blue-bottles in a palace, we shall have a dear, little, poky house, so much more sensible, and be able to have tinned meat for breakfast whenever we like, so to speak. And they are coming in next week, and are giving a huge fancy-dress ball the week after. Yes, the Vanes, of course. They find London so charming that they are seriously thinking of settling in England, or of being here, at any rate, every season. I delight in them, and she is going to send out two thousand invitations. You really must come, whether you like them or not."

Mabel Hartridge had not got that concentration or that consecution of reasoning faculty which is necessary to anyone who has to "sit down and think," and the longer she thought the less, on the whole, she liked it. This defection of Gladys, too, was a severe blow; her friends were laying down their arms and going over to the enemy in shoals. It was merely a waste of energy to go about abusing the Vanes, if abuse did not impede—as it certainly did not appear to do—their triumphal progress. Humiliating as it was, she came to the conclusion that she had better climb down.

So she called—in person. Mrs. Vane was out; but two days afterwards a footman returned a polite pasteboard with "Hampshire House" already printed in the bottom left-hand corner. Then she waited amid the growing clamor about costumes, but still her invitation did not come. Everyone, it appeared, was going; it was to be *the* event of the season. And she would not be there; the bitterness of that was inconceivable except to one whose sleeping and waking thoughts were wholly occupied with Society of the very largest S. She would almost as soon have been found cheating at bridge as absent from the party. At last, as the days sped by, she could bear it no longer; and she wrote humbly, imploringly, privately, begging for an invitation.

Mrs. Vane was emphatically a good-natured woman; but this letter gave her a pleasure which it was impossible to

acquit of malice. She showed it to her husband, who grinned.

"I guess she's had enough," he remarked. "Don't worry her any more, Lizzie. Write nicely."

"Shan't I wait just one mail, Cyrus?" she asked.

His shrewd, sharp face relaxed.

"Well, one," he said; "but only one."

This answer reached the "poky little house" about lunch time next day:

"DEAREST MABEL: I can't think how my secretary has been so stupid in not mailing you an invitation. Of course you must come to my little dance; I shall be just mad if you don't. And won't you come and see us before? I know how busy you are, but you might spare an hour for your old friend,

"ELIZABETH VANE."

Lady Hartridge quite suddenly felt her eyes grow a little dim.

"Really, she is rather a dear," she said to herself.



THE WEB OF A DAY

WET white clover and crab apple bloom,
 Pond weed tangle and jewel weed bed
 Wooed as I worked at my lonesome loom,
 Speeding the shuttle guiding a thread
 Gray as the web of my grieving,
 Down the copse at the end of the lane
 Someone whistled, but whistled in vain.
 The cows went trampling peacefully by—
 A wasted minute,—a wasted sigh;
 Again to the weary weaving,

A gown of yellowest, finest silk
 The light had flung to the sunny hills;
 The breeze was balmy as new drawn milk
 From cows that feed among daffodils
 And drink where the sweet herbs riot.
 The gold trailed off and the zephyr flagged,
 Aweary and slow, my shuttle lagged.
 "Always through shadows the path must be,
 Not for others, but only for me,"
 I said in the gloaming's quiet.

Over the whispering locust thatch
 A red star fastened its restless spark.
 Low, with the sound of a sliding latch
 Some one sang in the violet dark,
 Crushing the bloomy white clover.
 The light I missed at my lonesome loom,
 May apple flower and crab apple bloom,
 A soul at rest and a heart that beat
 To the song that makes the world so sweet
 Were mine—the weaving was over.

HATTIE WHITNEY DURBIN.

IN WAYS PRIMEVAL

By Beatrice Hanscom



HE boat from Marquette blew her whistle warningly for the *So-sa-wa-gaming*. The heavy surf boat put out in answer, and stood alongside to receive its possible passengers. The freight came first, to be disposed of as ballast; then a girl and a great St. Bernard stepped into the stern, and arranged themselves snugly out of the rowers' way.

The girl slipped her hat in her hand, and leaned comfortably against her shaggy, yellow protector.

"At last, Karl Heinrich," she sighed, contentedly, "we are approaching the life primeval."

The St. Bernard thumped his tail assuringly.

The dull green boat breasted the surf, and found the entrance to the river.

There was a restfulness in the very swash of the waves, in the cool precision with which the rowers swung the heavy boat across the shoal at the river's mouth, in the broad expanse of clear white sand along the beach, in the coziness of the level foreground, in the greens and browns of the great trees that had sentinelled the shore long before the coming of the paleface, in the hills which turreted themselves against the sky and shut out the rest of the world from an amphitheater beautiful enough to be Greek.

The girl's head stole up to the St. Bernard's collar. "We've found it, Karl Heinrich," she whispered—"a northern Eden! Pray Heaven that it is still free from the wiles of Adam and the snake!"

Voices and laughter floated out to her—child-voices that gurgled with glee, laughter that rippled with a pure merri-

ment. The boat swerved suddenly into the swimming-pool.

Half a score of children were bobbing about like so many gay little corks. Out in the deeper water, past the rope, a man was swimming with a leisurely strength, while crouched on his back a small, blond urchin clung tenaciously, chuckling with a fearful joy over the perils of such a ride.

With the dip of the oars, the man turned towards the boat. His eyes met the girl's, with a look of recognition which mirrored the suppressed vexation of her own. She inclined her head ever so slightly, and he bowed with what grace a man may in such a situation.

Then the boat slipped into the wharf, and the man swam to the shore opposite.

He shook off his sea-urchin, and rolled him over in the warm, white sand.

"Too bad, old man," he said, regretfully, "to have our peaceful wilderness invaded by a famed femininity who will expect us to talk shop, and find an eternal violet in every shadow. Heaven grant she'll stay on the clubhouse veranda, and leave us the out-of-doors!"

The girl put on her hat with a certain excess of dignity, as she prepared to land.

"You know, Karl Heinrich," she confided, "if we had dreamed that, after coming all these miles, we should find the celebrated author in possession, sopping up all the local color for copy, we should have preferred a tent in the desert. Our only hope is that he probably loves to sit on the piazza and read his works to the admiring crowd. Then we can have the woods."

* * * * *

The steward was in despair. Hart-

well had fought for a table to himself, and secured it.

And now Miss Creighton was equally determined to sit alone, and the only vacant seats in the dining room were those at Hartwell's table.

He dreaded Hartwell's reproaches, and he wondered at the unreasonableness of Miss Creighton's attitude in refusing so vehemently to sit in one of the five empty chairs.

"It isn't as though you would be crowded, Miss Creighton," he said, finally, with a weary determination. "You can sit at the other end of the table; and, since Mr. Hartwell feels just as you do about having his meals to himself, I should think you could manage very nicely by not talking at all. He's a *perfect* gentleman. You know, he's the author of——"

"I've met Mr. Hartwell," she interrupted. "I've not the slightest objection to him personally. I simply prefer to sit alone."

"I'm sorry, Miss Creighton," said the steward, quietly; and Miss Creighton recognized in his tone the decision of the superior court.

She shrugged her shoulders in acquiescence.

"*Convenu*," she said, with a brusque little nod, and ran down the clubhouse steps.

The steward watched her with a somewhat puzzled expression as she sped along the sandy beach, with the St. Bernard in close and delighted attendance.

"I wonder," he meditated, "what she meant by that. It sounded settled, anyway. And she's the girl that illustrates stories in all the big magazines! I should have thought she'd have jumped at the chance to sit at Mr. Hartwell's table, and him the great author."

"There's nothing queerer than women, though," he went on, voicing the plaint of all the ages, "and I don't suppose being talented makes them any less so." In which conclusion he was profoundly and undoubtedly correct.

The girl was curled up on the warm,

white sand, with a great driftwood log to lean against. The St. Bernard lay at her feet like Jerome's lion, looking at her lovingly.

The lake was still and blue, and the little waves that crept up upon the beach came with a careful stealth to touch daintily like white cats' paws at a coveted goal, and run back rippling to the shelter of the mother-lake.

The sunset glow set the world aflame. There was no other living creature in sight.

The girl was consulting her watch with a distinct interest.

"Only two minutes since we looked last, Karl Heinrich; but he must have finished dining by this time, even if he is as ravenous as this wonderful air makes us. And starvation is such a slow, unpleasant process, besides being un-beautifying. You're beginning to look a little plain yourself, Karl Heinrich. I don't dare think about me."

"I think we'll risk him, for something tells me there will be fish—brook trout, crisp, and speckled, and hot. Oh, that makes you sit up, does it? You blessed, mundane dog! Don't you begin being too clever, or you'll stop being restful."

Hartwell, having his after-dinner smoke in the darkest corner of the open pavilion, watched their return with an idle interest.

"Now, I wonder whether that is simple unpunctuality or careful design?" he meditated. "In any case, I needn't have gone without that huckleberry pie. There never was such ambrosial huckleberry pie as this cook concocts."

"Alas! the pathos of a useless sacrifice!" he concluded, with a gesture equal to Mounet-Sully's best effort in *Oedipus*.

Then, being of a contented mind, he smiled broadly into the friendly darkness, and leaned back to finish his cigar with a confirmed smoker's zest.

The girl awoke with the rested feeling of a child.

The morning sun was streaming in at her small, square, high window; the sound of the waves came up in a music-

al monotone, and the odor of fresh pine was in her nostrils, for the walls of her tiny room were sealed up as simply as a novice's cell.

"It's being born again," she murmured, delightedly, and rose to the rites of her toilet in a juvenile spirit which led her to plait her black hair in a long tail and don her plainest white linen gown.

"The fountain of eternal youth is here for the finding," she laughed, as she saw the effect. "*En avant, mademoiselle!*" and she marched down the stairs and out along the winding walk, inclosed by white birch hand-rails, over to the hall of sustenance.

The broad glass windows were opened wide to east and west in the cool dining hall. The place across the table was carefully cleared. The tall, blond boy who served her drew out her chair with more the manner of a gentleman than a waiter. The coffee was nectar, and the berries had the freshness of the morning dew. There was no pile of mail with its manifold demands; there was no morning paper. She thought restfully that there would not be another boat in for two days.

Out in the bustling world newsboys were crying their extras, and men were excited over foreign complications and national politics; here there was the peace of the forest.

She found Karl Heinrich waiting impatiently for her outside.

There was a bridge across the river which her feminine heart urged her to cross; there was a winding roadway through the woods which coaxed her on and on. The cool shadows of the great trees guarded it from the sun; the rich pink of thimble-berries and the fainter flush of wild roses pushed through the underbrush on either side; dwarf huckleberry bushes laden with purple clusters carpeted every untrodden spot. Shadows massed to velvety blackness beneath the great, old, first-growth pines; and the wood thrush tried her notes tentatively out of the fullness of a happy heart.

Then the river glimpsed below, and

the girl seated herself contentedly to watch the reflections which its smooth surface mirrored.

Karl Heinrich sat erect on guard beside her.

Oars splashed, and voices broke the stillness.

She laughed to see the suspicious haste with which a muskrat promptly fell off a log and into a watery security.

Two boys were rowing a boat upstream. Some smaller fry were hanging over the sides to dabble their hands in the water; and, lounging luxuriously in the stern, was Hartwell.

He caught sight of her white gown among the trees, and the mask of convention covered his face as he greeted her in passing.

"She poses well, confound her!" he muttered, irritably; "but I don't care for your living illustrations. Give me your natural girl, 'unlipped, unlesioned, young, and joyous-eyed,'" and, dreaming of Rosina, he quite forgot his moment's annoyance.

The girl frowned slightly as the boat passed.

"He's probably doing a juvenile," she commented. "It pays."

The sun crept in upon her sheltered nook, splashing through the leafage with a warm, rich radiance. The ozone of the northern air lulled her to sleepiness, and, slipping her head down on her arm, she floated away into the land of dreams.

"On guard, Karl Heinrich!" she murmured, drowsily.

It was his deep growl that roused her an hour later. Every hair on his huge body was bristling, as he defended the road from approach.

She sprang to her feet with a sense of threatened danger, which dwindled to amusement as she saw Hartwell standing in the roadway.

If he could not keep the vexation from his eyes, his smile was pleasant, and his tone courteous.

"I'm sorry to disturb your slumbers, Miss Creighton," he said, lightly; "but your guardian seems to object equally

to my advance or retreat. May I explain that, finding my juvenile associates determined to spend some hours in the pursuit of berrying, I was peacefully wending my way back to the clubhouse when I was challenged by the guard?"

Inwardly he raged against the ridiculousness of his position. To stand forcedly motionless in a sunny spot, at midday, with a hulking brute of a dog ready to spring at his slightest motion; to be thus pilloried before a young woman famed for a sense of humor as a distinguishing characteristic of her work, stung Hartwell's sensibilities and added to the dislike with which Miss Creighton had inspired him at their one and only meeting—that tea at Mrs. Von Sollard's, where they had been jointly lionized and treated as something abnormal and apart from the rest of the world, as much curiosities as the tattooed man and the snake charmer might have been; and where, with a growing restiveness under such fulsome praise as would have over-laureled a Dante and a Raphael, they had clashed against each other's personality with a willful persistence in showing their worst side, which had resulted in their parting with a deep sense of mutual relief.

"I'm tremendously sorry," said Miss Creighton. She had put her hand almost instantly on the dog's collar, but he held to his threatening attitude unbudgingly.

"Be quiet, Karl Heinrich; you're making a mistake," she said, sternly. But Karl Heinrich held his ground.

"He must know instinctively that you're a literary lion," she said, mirthfully. "No; don't move. I can't make him understand that way. I'll have to come to you, if you don't mind."

She crossed over to him, and laid her hand lightly on his coat sleeve, smoothing it for a second in a way which struck Hartwell as peculiarly agreeable.

"I know this gentleman, Karl Heinrich," she said, reproachfully. "Will you come and beg his pardon?"

The St. Bernard walked over solemnly, and extended his paw. Hartwell took it in the spirit it was offered.

"Your royal highness' apology is accepted," he said, gravely. "I assure you I shall never think of it again. When we meet later at the club, perhaps you will allow me to offer you a libation."

Miss Creighton smiled at him approvingly.

"And now, sir knight, the dragon is placated, and your way is free," she said; and there was a lilt of dainty mockery in her tone.

Something in its jocund dismissal awoke in Hartwell a desire to stay. The Scotch strain, a couple of generations back, began to obstinate itself, as our Gallic friends phrase it.

"Nice little nook here," he stated, impersonally.

"It is, rather," she assented. Her tone neither forbade nor invited.

Hartwell's determination deepened.

"And you were quite comfortable where you were sitting?"

"Entirely so," she informed him. She even sat down to give him ocular proof of the fact.

Hartwell piously gave thanks for his instruction in the great national game. The art of bluffing is a fine art, properly practiced, and should be taught to all who seek the beautiful. He seated himself placidly on the other end of the log.

"Do either of your royal highnesses object to smoke?" he inquired, affably.

"You have our regal permission," she said, graciously. Karl Heinrich blinked amiably.

Hartwell lighted his cigarette with a deliberate enjoyment. There was a comfortable silence. It established an atmosphere of geniality which was really surprising.

Hartwell spoke finally.

"Why Karl Heinrich?" he asked, lazily, nodding towards that peacefully recumbent animal.

She laughed with an amusement tinged with self-mockery.

"That's the way the story began," she said. "I went over to the Kelholm kennels one day for the sole and avowed purpose of buying a bull terrier."

"There were three delightfully ugly ones playing together, having the best kind of a time. It was just a question

of deciding between them. I walked off a bit, trying to make up my mind so that it would stay made up, and then I heard a soft little sigh. There, sitting all alone in his kennel, was a beautiful St. Bernard puppy, looking desperately lonely.

"He don't even take an interest in people lately," said the man. "You see, miss, he's pretty high priced. He's too high priced for this place, and he actually seems to know it. He's a queer little beggar. Seems to have kind of given up."

"I'd been to see Mansfield the night before in 'Old Heidelberg,' and loneliness had gotten on my nerves. So I bought him," she finished, simply. "The man asked an appalling price."

"I gave up a prospective dinner gown, which was to have been distinctly a beautifying influence, and some other things; but Karl Heinrich has had a happy life, after all, haven't you?" she asked him.

He raised his great head to lay it on her skirt, and gazed at her adoringly.

Hartwell thought, with a sudden warmth, that she was an uncommonly nice girl. Then he remembered her talent.

"I suppose his paintable qualities appealed to you, too," he said; and experienced the sensation of an iceberg in the offing.

"That had nothing to do with it," she said, stiffly.

There was a pause, and then she turned to him with that conventional suavity which he loathed.

"I suppose every rock and rill is getting turned into copy," she said. Her tone carried Hartwell back to Mrs. Von Sollard's in the twinkling of an eye. "Have you found enough types for another masterpiece?"

"I'm here to rest, not to write," said Hartwell, shortly. His tone was sulky.

It brought back to Miss Creighton a crowded room and a babble of voices, and a thoroughly detestable man. She had not identified him with Hartwell for the last ten minutes.

They meditated in a stillness which grew uncomfortably strained.

Hartwell was finally smitten with an

uncomfortable sense of his own shortcomings, which led him into a partial apology.

"I'm really trying to forget my work, instead of trying to remember it," he said. His tone had a surface serenity, at least. "I've written steadily for so many months that the reaction has come, and a pen is the one thing I can't bear the sight of. Business men leave their business cares when they take a vacation. Why shouldn't we brain-workers who struggle in the throes of mental creation the rest of the year? The summer may all come back some time into just the thing I want to write—it probably will; but I claim the privilege of being just a plain, primitive man for the time being, of living unthinkingly, lazily and naturally. That's why I like the children. They never remind you of yourself. They've all the vitally important things in their own lives."

Two little pink ovals came in Miss Creighton's cheeks.

"Why, you really understand!" she said, softly. "And I'm sorry I was cross. But I don't love Karl Heinrich because he's paintable, though I like to paint him because I love him, if you can understand that."

"I can't subordinate everything in my life to my work. I *won't*. Work is a big thing, and I'm glad I have it. I try faithfully to do my best, and I'm proud of my success."

"But it isn't all there is in life. I'm sick of being considered merely the pendant to it. I won't be, after all, even an extremely talented machine. I won't be finally and officially tagged as a rising illustrator. I'm a girl—just as much a girl as though I was stupid, or silly, or merely sensible, which is sillier still—and I intend to have a girl's good times without wearing my work around me constantly like a toga. Frilly things are more becoming, anyway," she mused.

"White linen frocks are," said Hartwell, promptly. The suggestion of a dimple appeared on her cheek.

"So much for our respective creeds," she said, lightly. "Behold Karl Heinrich and me venturing into the far Northwest to rest. Karl Heinrich is

the most restful influence of all, because he never minds when I'm stupid, or blue, or cross. He's stupid about a comfortable number of things himself, but he always stands by loyally."

"Karl Heinrich and I have many qualities in common," stated Hartwell, thoughtfully. "Couldn't you consider me as another soothing influence? I could be useful in some ways he's not adept in. I'll row you up the river till my arms pull out of the sockets," he persisted.

She hesitated daintily. Then she laughed. "How well do you row?" she asked, saucily.

"Stroke oar, Yale, '94," he laughed. "Always glad to show the recommendation from my last place."

"H-m-m!" said Miss Creighton, thoughtfully; "and where was your last place?"

"Yale, '94," said Hartwell, meekly. "I've just kept in solitary practice since then." His laughing eyes belied the statement.

"I can show you the Deserted Homestead, and the way to the Eagles' Nest, and the place where the huckleberries are biggest, and the exact spot where Père Marquette ought to have landed," he persisted. "You'll never find them all out for yourself. And none of the guides have my imagination," he concluded, drolly.

She laughed, capitulatingly.

"And the way to lunch?" she said, gayly. "I'm ravenously hungry."

"Good!" said Hartwell, exultantly. "We'll lunch together; shall we?"

"We *must*," she laughed. "I can't wait for the second table to-day. I'm famished."

The way back to the clubhouse seemed surprisingly short. Perhaps it was because they walked so very well together. Perhaps it was because it seemed to them only a prelude to the other walks they were to take.

Mrs. Bassett rocked industriously on the club veranda, just as she always rocked, summers, somewhere. Mrs. Bassett was wise with the wisdom of the

chronic resorter, which consists of the seeing eye and the babbling tongue.

She said she did *so* enjoy sitting where she could see the young people. I regret to chronicle that this enjoyment was not reciprocal.

"There they go again," she announced to Mrs. Wren.

"Who?" said Mrs. Wren, unable to look up at that moment, because she was putting a French knot in the center of a surprising flower in her centerpiece. The centerpiece was multi-colored, and designed to show what nature might have done with the vegetable creations if she had given it her undivided attention.

"Mr. Hartwell and Miss Creighton," said Mrs. Bassett, with some asperity. Mrs. Wren's indifferent attention was exasperating.

"He's very attentive, isn't he?" said Mrs. Wren, looking at the effect of the knot with a sincere admiration.

"So everyone *thinks*," said Mrs. Bassett, very seriously; "but I happen to know better. After they had spent about all their time for four days going off this way, I went and spoke to her. I thought 'twas my *duty*. 'My dear,' I said, 'I am an old woman.'

"You ought to sue yourself for libel," she said, right off, as quick as a flash. Wasn't that cute of her?

"And you haven't any mother here," I went on, though I really hated to, after she had been so nice. "I don't think it's proper for you to be off with that man all the time."

"Why, Mrs. Bassett," she said, getting kind of pink, "you mustn't think of him as a *man*. He's an *author*. And I'm an *illustrator*, you know. I don't mind telling you that we're collaborating—planning out a story and the sketches for it, you know. We professional people have to make our summers profitable."

"Come over here, Mr. Hartwell," she called to him. "I hope you won't scold me for telling Mrs. Bassett about our collaborating. I was explaining to her that that was why we were together so much."

"It's all in the day's work," he said,

as cool as you please. 'Are you ready now?' And off they went again. Attentive? He's looking out for number one!"

"What number silk do you think is best for borders?" asked Mrs. Wren, interestedly. She was holding her centerpiece at arm's length. Mrs. Bassett sniffed the sniff of one tried to the bone.

Swinging buoyantly along with a care-free stride, which proclaimed the joy of living, Hartwell and Miss Creighton made their way up the shore to the scene of the day's pilgrimage.

Karl Heinrich followed with the blind devotion of the Light Brigade. "His not to reason why."

The sand was cool and firm to their tread from the last storm, and recorded every step of their progress as faithfully as though it knew that these were, indeed, celebrated prints.

The breeze came from the north, and Miss Creighton had donned in its honor a trim little coat as frankly scarlet as an autumn leaf, while the very tilt of her broad-brimmed sailor hat suggested a jaunty defiance to winds that blow.

Her eyes danced with joyous nonsense.

"I do not fear, though far I fare,
The North-land to explore,"

She chanted in burlesque:

"I'd rather meet a polar bear
Than face a parlor bore!"

"Infant!" said Hartwell, indulgently. "I've great sympathy for the prematurely aged, myself," she retorted, saucily.

"Not guilty!" said Hartwell, promptly.

"Well, perhaps you are not," she admitted, looking at him critically; "but the piazza-ites are. Think of them! Using their eyes for embroidery and tatting and crocheting, when they might see the world and the loveliness thereof."

"When they might have gone to Williams Island, and sat still as mice, watching the deer come down to drink," said Hartwell, lazily. "Nor have they

had to caution Karl Heinrich not to disturb the grouse family, who were so timidly anxious lest people might not remember it was out of season. Nor," he went on, teasingly, "have they been down to the Haunted Homestead, and grown really pathetic over the poor homesteader who never came back to his little cabin."

"You were too interested in the raspberries to show the least feeling over the poor fellow," said Miss Creighton, indignantly.

"I sincerely hope, for his sake, that he was not taken off in the raspberry season," murmured Hartwell, meditatively.

"That pathetic little, broken-down stove in the cabin," mused Miss Creighton, "and all the poor little makeshifts he'd been so ingenious about, and taken such pride in, doubtless." Her voice held a grieved tenderness, altogether womanly. "The poor, poor boy!" she sighed.

"Boy!" said Hartwell, amusedly. "He was probably a brawny man, who would have been insulted at being called a boy."

"Not if he was a brawny man," laughed Miss Creighton. "It's only an insult to a boy. The bigger and brawnier the man was, the more he would have liked it and been flattered by it."

"On the principle that a large, fat woman yearns to be called 'little girl,'" commented Hartwell.

"Precisely," said Miss Creighton, promptly. "The most delightful thing in the world is to be credited with the qualities you know you don't possess. I suppose Mrs. Eagle, whose house we are going to see, would be most flattered if we asked her if she were a cousin of Miss Nightingale."

"And, if her social training was what it should have been, she would probably say that their singing voices really were quite similar, but that she had such a shocking cold that she shouldn't give us the opportunity of deciding which was the best," murmured Hartwell. "Then she would never, never let us hear her sing. I've staved off incipient anguish several times by assuring the young women who were about to cause it, that I had heard

that their high notes had a fuller quality than Ternina's. No girl with a grain of sense will let you lose an illusion like that."

"The hypocrisy of man!" said Miss Creighton.

"Self-preservation," he pleaded.

"I'm losing faith in you," she said, with mock severity. "Where is your Eagles' Nest, anyway?"

"Just beyond those trees," he assured her. "But we mustn't take Karl Heinrich. If he raised that princely voice of his, it might get us into trouble."

Miss Creighton took a pair of heavy gloves from her coat pocket, and laid them on the sand.

"On guard, Karl Heinrich!" she said, pointing to them.

They left him sitting erect, a faithful sentinel.

A moment's turns and twists through the trees brought the goal in sight.

In the center of a flat bit of marshy ground stood a tall, dead tree. A great basket-like structure was woven in the top of it.

Branches of saplings had been patiently intertwined till a great, round, gray bowl, five feet in diameter, rested on the treetop.

The half-breed guides will tell you that it was there in their father's time, and in their father's father's time as well.

To that capacious nest the eagles return year after year, faithful to their first home as to their first mate; and each year a new family of ungainly and scraggy eaglets get their first glimpses of a world all sky from this high vantage point.

How surprised they must be when they finally see the earth beneath, only they could tell us.

"This *is* luck!" said Hartwell, jubilantly; for, as they looked, two small eaglets poked their inquisitive heads over the edge of the nest.

Then came a glimpse of an ungainly little body poised uncertainly on the nest's very edge; and then down to the ground the adventurous one tumbled, to flop about uncertainly with infantile fright.

"He might manage very nicely if his head were not so large. Do you suppose he'll ever grow up to it? It seems like a life work," whispered Miss Creighton, tiptoeing nearer to the grayish-brown flutter budget.

The eaglet, regarding her as a menace, increased the distance promptly.

The sun came out from a fleecy cloud and beamed upon them.

"It's much warmer back from the lake, isn't it?" commented Miss Creighton. "Don't you want to carry my coat for me?"

She tossed it deftly to Hartwell, and he disposed it over his arm with the comfortable ease of long practice.

"Now," she said, "we'll see what that absurd infant will do to retrieve his fallen fortunes. No, I'm not coming a bit nearer. You needn't be frightened, you silly, downy thing."

A shadow darkened the blue above. Hartwell glanced up.

An eagle was sailing leisurely, in great, circular sweeps.

"Come instantly!" he said, imperatively. "It's the mother coming home."

But even as Miss Creighton turned to obey him, the eagle saw her eaglet in possible peril. The great wings closed; and, swift as the vengeance of Heaven, she dropped, with the sound of the rushing wind, to give battle.

Whether it was the glittering buckle on Miss Creighton's hat—whether she struck in blind rage at whatever came first—Hartwell saw to his horror that it was at the girl, and not himself, that the great bird threw herself, with opened bill and eyes distended.

The terrible talons fastened in the straw hat and tore with a ripping sound, hideous with presage.

He saw the frozen terror in Miss Creighton's face, as she flung her arms out helplessly.

In the blind impulse to save her, he thrust his left arm fairly into the eagle's talons. It was the arm which held the red coat. His desperate prayer was for a weapon. His eyes fell on a clublike stick almost at his feet, and he stooped to it with the quickness of a heaven-born hope.

To the flaming scarlet lure the great bird's rage transferred itself furiously. The talons tore through the coat to Hartwell's arm beneath; but, even as he felt the stinging of torn flesh, he spent all the force of his right arm in a swinging blow.

It sent the eagle reeling to the ground, the scarlet coat still clutched in its talons.

Hartwell stood undecided whether to strike again. Miss Creighton caught his wrist.

"Not unless it's necessary," she whispered, hoarsely.

"We must run for it!" he shouted, as though she were deaf. They sped their way across to the shelter of the trees. Then they looked back.

The eagle was tearing the scarlet coat to ribbons in a blind fury.

The eaglet, the cause of all the trouble, was parading about in comparative complacency.

The stick dropped from Hartwell's hand, and he and Miss Creighton looked at each other.

Miss Creighton's hat was a ruined mass of straw; her hair was torn and disheveled, and her face was gray. Hartwell's left coat sleeve was in shreds below the elbow, and what remained of the shirt sleeve beneath was wet with welling crimson.

Miss Creighton laughed shakily.

"For people in search of the primitive, we're doing remarkably well," she said, unsteadily. "Give me your handkerchief, and let me tie up your arm."

"Nothing but a flesh wound. Looks worse than it is," said Hartwell, as she improvised a bandage.

Speech seemed curiously difficult.

Karl Heinrich greeted them with a nervous whimper.

"We know we *aren't* looking our best," Hartwell began to him; but Miss Creighton slipped her arms around the great, shaggy, yellow neck.

"It would have been so hard not to have come back, Karl Heinrich!" she whispered.

* * * * *

A driftwood fire blazed on the beach.

The night was warm, and the stars were doing their best to be decorative. The great lake of Superior was in a placid mood.

Some one had hung steamer rugs between two of the piles of the uncompleted pier; had banked pillows against them, and heaped blankets on the sand.

Snugly ensconced in this niche before the fire sat Miss Creighton.

Karl Heinrich lay with his head in her lap. Hartwell tossed a final dry branch on the blazing fire; then he threw himself down beside her.

"For a man with a bandaged arm, I consider that's a particularly successful fire," he commented. "You're surely warm enough?"

"Toasted," said Miss Creighton, laughingly, "and I'm not an invalid. I haven't been scalped since this afternoon."

Hartwell put his hand out suddenly and touched hers.

"To think you might have been hurt seriously—disfigured—it's hideous!" he said, hoarsely. "I can't forgive myself for taking you there."

"You mustn't feel that way," said Miss Creighton, steadily. "I should have gone some time, anyway, if you hadn't taken me; and if I had been alone—I'm rather glad you happened to be here," she finished, in a lighter tone.

"I didn't happen to be here," said Hartwell. There was nothing light about his tone. "It was meant from the beginning of things that I *should* be here. It's a part of the very scheme of creation. It's the only reason the club was built, and the lake wove this curve in the beach and coaxed the river to it just here—so that you and I should meet here at last; so that I should know you, and—love you absolutely. Not for your talent, nor in spite of it. Just you. Yet, after all, I'm glad we each have our work. We may get tired of it; we may run away from it; but, when we have rested, we shall go back to a beautiful companionship in it. Isn't that great? And yet the really great, vital thing is not that at all. It is Love: the one great, resistless power that has kept

the heart of the world swinging round and round in the ether of eternal youth: that has brought our two lives together and welded them into one for the rest of all time."

His voice dropped to the lover's cadence.

"For it has, hasn't it?" he whispered.

Miss Creighton sat very still.

It may have been the stars that lent their splendor to her eyes; it may have been the lake breeze that stung her cheeks to crimson; but Hartwell forgot the heavens above, and the earth beneath, and the sound of the waters that surged in his ears, when she looked at him.

"It was because I had just found that out, though I hadn't given you the benefit of my discovery," she said, and there was laughter and a shaking sob, and something more, in her voice, "that made it so additionally hard to face the possibility of disfigurement to-day, when I had only begun to taste the sweetness of life."

Karl Heinrich felt decidedly neglected; but he liked Hartwell, which made it easier. When they went in at last, Mrs. Bassett sat in the reading room.

"It'll be a wonder if you haven't caught your death of cold," she said, severely. "I'm going away to-morrow, and I declare I shall be worried."

Miss Creighton laughed gayly.

"We'll send you news of the story," she said.

"And it's a very superior story, Mrs.

Bassett," said Hartwell, exultantly.

Mrs. Bassett looked at him with distinct disapproval.

"There is such a thing as setting too much store on a story," she observed.

"I'll tell you what, Mrs. Bassett," said Hartwell, propitiatingly. "The story is coming out the first of December. I'll send you a—well, kind of a first edition in November. How would you like that?"

"I'll give you my address," said Mrs. Bassett, much mollified.

She scrutinized carefully a certain thick, white envelope which the postman brought one November day. Then she opened it.

"An invitation to their wedding! First edition, indeed!" she gasped. Then, as she adjusted the idea in her mind, she smiled grimly.

"I'm not sure but I like him better'n I ever thought I would," she commented. "It's the only story there's any excuse for, anyway."



THE WORLDLESS TOUCH

THE sun on autumn hills, a twilight sea,
 The touch of western gold on paling wings,
 Soft rain by night, the flute of early birds,
 And wind-tost children voices—these to me
 Wake thoughts that sleep beyond the bourne of words,
 Yet whisper low: "Whate'er this life may be,
 Teased by what are half-lost rememberings,
 Thou, thou hast lived before, and known these things!"

ARTHUR STRINGER.

PETER'S PENCE

By Elizabeth Duer



HE Thraxtons' omnibus was waiting at the door of their seaside villa one Friday evening in August, and their three guests—Miss Dovey Lavender, her brother, Bill, and Mr. Peter Wray—were assembled in the hall ready—nay, impatient—to be off; for Mr. Wray was giving a large dinner at the club, and the clock was nearly on the stroke of eight. Whatsoever annoyed Peter Wray agonized Miss Lavender. She had a way of saying what he thought that relieved his feelings, yet left him blameless.

"I really think Mrs. Thraxton and Nell might remember that you ought to be at the club ahead of your guests," she said, turning to Peter, "especially as you have to find somebody at this late hour to fill Mr. Thraxton's place. I wonder whether they knew he wasn't coming down? I hear it has been an exciting day in Wall Street."

Before Wray could respond to this echo of his thoughts, a maid tripped down the stairs and delivered a message to the effect that Mrs. Thraxton begged that those who were ready would drive on and send the carriage back for her.

They needed no second bidding. Peter Wray almost thrust Miss Lavender into the omnibus, and breathed a sigh of relief when the horses started with a rush. Perhaps the Thraxton clocks were fast, he thought, as he recovered tranquillity.

Ostensibly he was giving this dinner to Mr. and Mrs. Thraxton as a slight recognition of their hospitality; but, in reality, it was one of a series of intimate attentions he had been showering on

the girl of his choice—their charming daughter, Nell.

Five minutes brought the omnibus to the clubhouse, and five more found it once more waiting before the Thraxtons' luxurious cottage, which was perched close to the sea, with its south piazza resting on a sand dune, and only a strip of yellow beach intervening between it and the curling breakers.

Poor Mrs. Thraxton was almost tempted to wade out into those convenient waters till they overwhelmed her, instead of going decorously to a dinner party. She felt literally between the devil and the deep sea. Ruin was hanging over them, and Nell—her darling Nell—who, at least could be saved from privation by marrying Peter Wray, was obstinately declaring that a dinner of herbs with her mother was preferable to the fatted calf with Peter.

Mrs. Thraxton now stood beside her daughter's dressing table, half turned away, as if their conference were over. She was very magnificent in black lace and diamonds, though her expression of despair accorded ill with her festive attire.

"If you feel that you cannot do it," she was saying, "I suppose I must not urge you; but, oh, Nell! the alternative is horrible! If your father's firm goes under, we have nothing to fall back upon. We have used every cent of my money; and what could you or I do toward self-support? You must marry money—and here is your chance. Take it."

Nell was quietly mopping her eyes, trying not to disfigure herself more than she had already done before appearing in public, and wondering

whether she could tell her mother the real truth without a fresh burst of tears. She risked it.

"It isn't only that I'm indifferent to Peter Wray," she said, brokenly, "but I love Charley Beaumont. I love his faults as much as his virtues. I like him to be heedless and lazy and good-natured. It is a great deal more human to prefer play to work. Everything about him is adorable. He is such a gentleman!"

She shuddered as she pressed her hands against Peter's orchids pinned in the front of her pale lilac evening dress—as if such delicate little hands could hold down such a flood of emotion.

"You cannot afford him," said Mrs. Thraxton, with plain directness, much as if she were speaking of a new horse; and then, walking to the door, added:

"Here is the omnibus back. For all our sakes, I entreat you to think twice before you refuse Mr. Wray when he asks you this evening; and, believe me, in five years' time it will not make the slightest difference. I married the man I loved, and——"

She paused, and her daughter finished the sentence.

"And you wish you hadn't! Well, papa would not have been my choice, either; but Charley is!"

No further allusion was made to the subject. They drove rapidly through the soft night air, till they came to the clubhouse, with its blaze of electric lights and string of carriages setting down guests.

Half a dozen dinners were in progress that night, to be succeeded by a subscription dance to which the whole colony repaired.

As Mrs. Thraxton and Nell crossed the hall to join Mr. Wray and his party, a good-looking young man in serge clothes, with sleepy blue eyes contrasting oddly with a complexion tanned to mahogany, started from the counter of the office where he was recording his name, and bounded after them.

"I look a shocking ruffian, don't I, Mrs. Thraxton?" he apologized. "But I have just come over from New London on my uncle's yacht, and driven

from Peconic here in a milk cart. The dust and dew you encourage in this part of the world would turn a spotless angel into a tramp."

Mrs. Thraxton had not time to heave as much as a sigh at this destroyer of her plans before an elderly gentleman in spick-and-span evening dress spoke to her, and gave Mr. Charles Beaumont a chance to whisper to Nell.

"I must get back to the yacht to-night, and I haven't any evening clothes with me; so mind you shake your party, and meet me round the turn of the piazza the moment dinner is over. I'll get a shower and a bite, and be waiting for you by half-past nine. I suppose you are dining with that ass, Wray?"

"Oh, Charley!" she said, with a groan; "they say I must dine with him for keeps."

"Hey!" said Mr. Beaumont, half in inquiry, half in incredulity—standing like one petrified.

The curtain always goes down on the theatrical tableau, and the portière dropped between Beaumont and Nell as she followed her mother into the reception room.

Dinner that night represented sawdust to Miss Thraxton; and she looked with wonder at Dovey Lavender, who was doing such a lot of talking and eating to please Peter, and looking so well curled as to head and so eminently the fine woman as to bust and shoulders. Why didn't Peter want to marry Dovey? She was as willing as Barkis; and, what was more, she would make a personage of him. At present he hadn't many ideas beyond taking care to get a great deal for his money—especially in fashion—and becoming the husband of Nell Thraxton.

The table was ablush with pink hydrangeas and pink shaded lights, relieved here and there by the deep purple of hothouse grapes, piled high in crystal baskets. Nell looked across at Peter, and thought how ill all this luxury of setting became his peculiar cast of plainness, his snub features and red complexion; and he looked at her, and thought how exquisitely her blond beauty would grace the head of a gentle-

man's table. Was there ever a sweeter cleft in a girl's chin, or a more lovely line of brow and cheek, or a more haughty little nose? At that moment she raised her eyes, and Peter discovered a hunted, sorrowful look that made him uncomfortable. He wondered whether she knew her father was in difficulties, and whether women fretted over such things. Ah, well! He would ask her to marry him that evening; and, if she accepted him, perhaps he would tide old Thraxton over his troubles—indeed, he had hinted as much to Mrs. Thraxton in a confidential talk they had had that morning. He valued his money, but never objected to spending when it was seriously worth his while.

At the end of dinner, Dovey proposed that they should have their coffee on the piazza, where the men could smoke; and Nell went to the dressing room to get her mother's wrap; but, instead of bringing it herself, she sent it by a servant with a hasty scrawl which Mrs. Thraxton read, and then flushed with annoyance.

"Make what excuse you can for me. I am saying good-by to Charley."

That was the note.

When "Thisbe fearfully o'ertripped the dew," she was probably provided with stout sandals, and no other stockings than her pretty, brown skin; but Nell, skipping across the dusty road and wet grass to reach the lake, ruined a pair of lilac satin slippers and set pneumonia at defiance.

Beaumont cut a rope, stole a boat, and helped Nell in; and, having rowed hard for five minutes, he shipped his oars, and, stepping to the seat that faced her, he took her hand.

"So you are going to chuck me, Nelly!" he said. "I have been hearing things about you and Wray—oh, I don't blame you! I know I'm no good; I ought to have been at work these three years, and by this time I might have got something together to offer you; but it cuts pretty deep, all the same."

The moon was so bright that the water looked purple instead of black, and a golden pathway rippled across the lake. A little cold breeze came stealing from

the ocean over the dunes, and the girl shivered. Beaumont's coat was off in a moment and round her shoulders.

"Don't be unhappy, dear," he said, gently. "I can guess how it is; there are stories afloat in Wall Street that explain the pressure brought to bear; and, honestly, I couldn't be happy to take you out of the kind of life you have been accustomed to in order to rough it with me. I'm a selfish, low-down beast to have let you get even a little bit attached to me, and then do nothing toward making an income. But, somehow, these things take one unawares—you don't deliberately plan them, you know, and I could no more help loving you than breathing; and as to work—" He sighed, and burst out with a proposition. "Look here, Nell! Uncle Richmond to-day offered me a position in something nasty he has out in New Jersey—crude petroleum, I believe. He said it would give me about twenty-five hundred a year. Could we manage to live on that?"

She shook her head.

"It would be impossible for either of us. Besides," she added, with a despairing laugh, "they wouldn't keep you for a month. What do you know of business, Charley?"

He dropped his head on his hands, knowing the truth of her judgment.

"It makes me sick to think of my uncle!" he said, plaintively. "Why, that man is rolling in petroleum, and up to this summer I thought myself as sure of his money as I am of heaven; and now they say he is making up to a widow in Boston. Imagine marrying at his age! The thing is disgusting."

Nell ignored this lack of consideration on the part of the elder Mr. Beaumont, and came sorrowfully to the subject that was weighing on her heart.

"Do you know why I came out with you this evening?" she asked, nestling the hand within his grasp a little closer. "I came to say good-by—to make everything straight and above-board between us. My mother has appealed to me to marry Peter Wray, and I have a fancy her reasons are more urgent than she is willing to confess. I couldn't ask her, exactly, the price I am to bring. She

has enough to bear without my bringing home the fact that she is putting me up for sale. I know she tells herself it is to save me from poverty; but I fancy a crash may be averted if I do as I am told. Row back, Charley!"

Fifteen minutes later, when Nell joined her mother at the door of the ballroom, she looked pale enough to justify that lady in saying that her daughter was feeling far from well, and that they would telephone for their carriage and go at once if Mr. Wray would excuse them, as the lights and heat made Nell's head ache.

Peter was both anxious and irritated; he had intended this dinner to do special honor to Miss Thraxton, and she had been late in coming and absent during that romantic half-hour on the piazza when he had meant to lay his heart and his fortune at her feet.

He was almost sulky when he put her into her carriage, and his mood so alarmed Mrs. Thraxton that she went down on her knees to her daughter when they got home in renewed entreaties.

In the meanwhile, Peter Wray was not left disconsolate. Miss Lavender was ready to dance the cotillon with him, and, seeing the cloud on his brow, she exerted herself to amuse him till his attention was distracted from his annoyance and concentrated on Dovey's pleasant conversation. She was so quick to catch his ill-expressed ideas, and really to return them to him in a form subtly flattering to his vanity.

This reprieve to Nell was but for the night, and she waked the next morning with the same sense of impending sorrow that she had carried to bed with her.

By breakfasting in her room, she gained a few hours more. Through her curtains she watched a pantomime that seemed amusing to her, in spite of her low spirits. Peter came out from the piazza and began stamping down a mole track in the lawn before the house, and Dovey promptly joined him. She picked a yellow rose from Nell's own tree and handed it to Peter, who put it in his coat. Then she unfolded a letter, and, after much explanation, gave it to him

to read. They both laughed, and Peter counted out a number of bank notes and offered them to Dovey, who shook her head and pointed to the postmark of the letter. Evidently it was one of her many charities to which Peter was to be allowed to contribute by check, not by money. Then the dogcart came to the door for Peter, who was going to play tennis, and Dovey stood patting the horse's shining coat while Peter got in. She was as well groomed as the horse—not a hair out of place, and her linen clothes fitted her without a wrinkle. A very charming person was Dovey in her character of confidential friend.

Nell took a kind of contemptuous comfort in what she saw. If Dovey didn't consider Peter's capture hopeless, why should she despair? The step from betrothal to marriage is a long one.

At noon she drove Dovey in her own little phaëton to the beach for their customary swim, and there they met Peter just coming out of his bath house. He had been playing tennis and his face was burned to a lobster pink, while his neck and arms—liberally displayed by an exceedingly curtailed bathing suit—gleamed white as a baby's.

"Isn't he unpleasant?" rose to the girl's lips; and then she checked the utterance as disloyal to her future lord.

Dovey found nothing in Peter's appearance to offend her taste, but suffered much alarm on account of his health.

"You are too warm to go in the water now," she remonstrated, raising a warning finger. "Sit down here and cool off while we get ready to join you."

With a dispatch that would have astonished her maid, Nell put on her bathing dress, called through the partition to Dovey that she was ready, and, without waiting for a reply, went by a back way across the heavy sand to the sea.

No one noticed her in her quiet, dark dress; but when Dovey, in red silk serge with handkerchief and stockings to match, came proudly treading her way down, followed by Peter, there was a perceptible craning of necks. Ocean-town understood the triangular tangle much better than Peter did. They knew

that he wanted to marry Nell Thraxton and that Miss Lavender meant to marry him, and the betting was about even.

Dovey made little skips through the spent foam, and even took a small wave without flinching; but when a monster one rose suddenly close to the shore she clasped Peter in a close embrace, and there were those among the lookers-on who felt their money would be safer on the scarlet lady.

Peter was getting a trifle restive under this pursuit; and a moment later, when Bill Lavender dashed past, he stopped him and ungallantly presented him with the charge of his sister, while he himself struck out for Nell.

It is discouraging to find that the Atlantic is not spacious enough to protect a young woman from persecuting love, and the game ended by Nell's being tagged near the corks. She was reproached for her unkindness, and the tones of Mr. Wray's voice were so pleading that she consented to ride with him that afternoon; and knew that, in promising, she was inviting her doom. She was so dejected that she took no part in the conversation between her guests as they drove home. Peter wondered whether they were too late to catch the postboy, and Dovey devoutly hoped they were not, as she wanted to send off that check Peter had promised her earlier in the day. Peter said that women with pet charities were unconscionable beggars, and Dovey declared she was begging in the cause of romance; that a young missionary to the Moros wanted to be married before he sailed and to take his wife with him, and, of course, it cost money; but she added, ingenuously:

"If you were going to the Philippines, Mr. Wray, shouldn't you want a wife to go with you?"

And Peter answered:

"Even staying at home, I covet the article."

Whereupon both ladies blushed.

Peter was lunching out; he was much sought after in Occantown society; and consequently he and Nell did not meet again till they were ready for their ride.

The groom who led Nell's horse to

the door was dressed to go with them; but, in deference to a murmured request from Peter, the man was left behind. A more submissive person than Miss Thraxton would be hard to find.

Right away from the ocean, up the broad village street they rode, meeting every woman they knew—or so Nell fancied—and on every face the same expression of amused curiosity. She knew they were saying, "That's a match!" and she hated them.

Across the railway track, along a stretch of dusty road, and then they reached the long line of wooded hills through which roads and bridle paths wander in leafy seclusion. Even Peter, with words of love trembling on his lips, drew rein at Nell's bidding to enjoy the panorama that surrounded them. East and west the treetops outlined the succession of the hills, while to the north Long Island Sound pierced the shore in bays and inlets, with bold promontories and invading marshland, and behind them, glistening in the afternoon sun, stood the steeples and villas of Occantown against the interminable blue of the Atlantic.

Nell gave a little sigh, and said to Peter:

"Isn't it beautiful?"

And Peter smiled back, and laid a detaining hand on her horse's neck.

"Miss Thraxton—Nell," he said, "I suppose you know I am going to ask you to marry me? I cannot flatter myself that you care much, but love is humble—anything you can give me in the way of regard is like a gift from heaven."

She began to think she had underrated Peter's tact; that, in considering him purse-proud and bumptious, she had been unjust; but his next sentence was not quite so agreeable.

"You know," he went on, "when a man happens to have more than his share of this world's goods"—here he inflated his chest a little—"he has many opportunities to help friends less fortunate; and, if you will marry me, I am sure that together we shall make the best use of my money."

She couldn't help understanding that

her father was the less fortunate friend, and that she was being bribed; but why should she mind? she asked herself. Hadn't she come riding out into the woods on purpose to let Peter Wray conclude the negotiations so skillfully begun by her mother?

"You are very kind," she said, sadly, "and deserve something better than the friendship I have to give; but if you are sure you can bear with my coldness and let me learn slowly how to please you, I am content to try."

Her lower lip trembled, but there was no sign of tears.

Peter was not in the least abashed by this confession of indifference. Consent was all he had hoped for, and consent he had wrung from her; all the rest would come naturally, purchased by the luxury that women love.

"Don't be afraid to trust yourself to me," he answered. "I'll engage to make you love me within a month. The coldness will be thawed out and we'll have a jolly life. Why, even granite melts in a conflagration," he added, smiling.

There was a bluff heartiness in his last sentence that pleased her; the interview was not as unpleasant as she had feared; and, by way of acknowledgment, she stretched out her hand to him, leaning slightly from her saddle. But Peter, quick to seize an opportunity, brought his horse a step nearer, and, throwing his right arm around her, he tried to kiss her cheek.

Her hands tightened so suddenly on the reins that her horse, a nervous animal, winced under the pain, and began curvetting in a manner that put an end to all familiarities. Possibly there were memories of the evening before that made such endearments a profanation; and yet, how futile it was to accept a situation and then recoil from what it entailed.

When duty has to instruct love, there is something fundamentally wrong with the passion. Even Nell acknowledged that, and so second thoughts made her say:

"Forgive me, Peter—of course you may kiss me."

Peter's brow contracted. He looked

at the cheek, pale as a cherry blossom, which had been turned from him but a moment before, and said, coldly:

"Thank you; we won't force inclination. Would you like to go home?"

During the ride back he managed to interest her in practical questions of housekeeping; of how and where she would like to live; and, by keeping his future companionship well in the background, she was induced to express her opinion.

Her father had arrived when they reached home, and Peter had a confidential talk with him at once. It must have been of a consoling nature, for the look of anxiety which the poor gentleman had worn for many weeks had gone when they met at dinner, and Mrs. Thraxton was gay as a lark. Nell could not help being a little carried away by the family happiness; in the first flush of sacrifice, one is vastly sustained by good results.

Dovey Lavender seemed to guess that the crisis had come, for she maintained a dismal silence through soup and fish; but finally, during a pause in the conversation, she said, sharply, looking at Peter but speaking to Nell:

"By the way, Nell, where were you and Charley Beaumont hurrying last evening while we were having coffee? I saw you crossing the road toward the lake, and I meant to have asked you about it this morning."

Mrs. Thraxton went scarlet, and Peter looked suspicious; but Nell, at bay, was a courageous creature, and she enjoyed turning back Dovey's maliciousness on her own head.

"Ah, that is something you will never know, Dovey!" she said, teasingly. "There is only one person I am making confessions to nowadays, and that is Mr. Wray; perhaps you have not heard that we are engaged?"

She smiled divinely at Peter, who fairly beamed with pleasure. He scorned to ask questions of a person who had just proclaimed herself ready to confess.

Two weeks passed. Peter had closeted interviews with Mr. Thraxton, and in that gentleman's company thrice visited Wall Street. He and Dovey were fix-

tures at Oceantown, though Peter had ostensibly moved from the Thraxtons' to the club. Vaguely Nell was given to understand that a bad corner had been rounded, and Thraxton & Co. were rolling along on four wheels.

Oceantown made free of the engagement, and the New York papers gave it a paragraph of unusual length.

Nell was gradually losing the courage which had carried her over the first days, and her face looked drawn, while her spirits grew worse and worse. Dovey, on the contrary, recovered from the shock, and was more the guardian of Peter's happiness than ever.

Across the superficial calm came a tempest in the shape of a letter—that innocent-looking cause of so much mischief.

It was from Charley Beaumont.

Avuncular affection had extended his yachting trip as far as Halifax, and there a supply of letters and New York papers reached him after a week's delay, and brought the unwelcome news of Nell's engagement. He had grown—what he was pleased to call—"remarkably chummy" with his uncle during those days at sea; and, in the confidence begotten by a starlight night, with no sound beyond the straining of the sails and the rush of the water as the schooner tore along in the steady breeze, Charley told his troubles, and received sympathy of so substantial a nature that from Bar Harbor he wrote to Nell, and followed hard upon his letter's tracks himself.

The letter reached her first by about five hours. In it he told her that he had just heard the horrid news of her engagement; that he considered the whole transaction worse than a slave trade, and he simply couldn't stand it, and didn't mean to; that when she broke with him that night in the rowboat he was so unhappy and ashamed of his own idle life that he told himself she was well rid of him; but he saw things in a truer light now; that she was committing a crime against Mr. Wray as well as against her own nature, and it was only honest to tell him the truth. The letter wound up with the characteristic

statement that "Uncle Richmond" had shown the instincts of a white man to such an extent that there was no longer any obstacle to their marriage but the one she had herself set up; even her father would be pleased to welcome him as a son-in-law, because— Here the narrative broke off with the promise to tell it all when he saw her, that he was coming by train from Bar Harbor, and would arrive almost as soon as his letter, and that he always was and always would be her own true love.

This letter reached Nell just before lunch, and with the eyes of the whole family upon her she did not dare to do more than glance at its contents; but, later in the afternoon, when Peter had gone for a drive with Mrs. Thraxton, Nell stole down to the beach by herself and read her letter, and then read it again, and kissed the silly words about Charley's being her own true love, and hated herself for kissing it. She meant to withstand this last awful temptation to escape from Peter, though she couldn't help hoping she might see Charley alone for a moment, just to tell him that she hadn't the moral courage to draw back and bring trouble once more on the family, and that he must learn to hate her.

With a tightening of her heart, she folded her letter and tucked it into the front of her dress. Alas! for the folly of present-day women who know not pockets! She could not have put it in a more insecure place.

From the shore she mounted the sand dune by means of a flight of rustic steps, and, going into the house, she knocked at Dovey's door. It never occurred to her that Charley could arrive that evening. In thus seeking Dovey, she was making her plans to secure an uninterrupted interview with him the next morning. A match between two golf champions was in progress at the golf club, and Nell proposed that Dovey should drive Peter over, as they were both enthusiasts, whereas she—Nell—had no interest in the game. Dovey, who was lying down, gave a sleepy assent. She dogged Peter's footsteps almost as unremittingly as before his en-

gagement, and waited upon him with patient persistence.

From Dovey's room Nell went to her own to lock up her letter, only to discover she had dropped it; and, in a tremor of fright, she searched the hall and staircase, and then returned to Dovey and found that young lady sound asleep. She roused herself enough to say that she had seen no letter, but that Nell was welcome to look where she pleased; and, as there was no trace of the missing paper, Nell ran down to the shore, and even tossed over the sands at the foot of the rustic steps—but all to no avail. Finally she gave up the search, and, in a misery of apprehension, turned into the library and tried to distract her mind in a book. One comfort was that the letter had no beginning.

The library opened from the drawing room, screened from view by a portière; but, as this was of light texture, it did not prevent conversation from reaching the inner room. Nell heard her mother's carriage return, and then Mrs. Thraxton and Peter came gayly into the drawing room; and then there was the rattle of the tea tray, and a message sent to the young ladies that tea was served. One young lady continued in hiding; but Miss Lavender rustled down in a gorgeous pink silk tea gown with ruffles of priceless lace, and Peter and Mrs. Thraxton made their compliments to her toilet. Then the elder lady, having drunk her tea, excused herself; and then Nell heard Dovey say to Wray:

"I have had such a grateful letter from the missionary to the Philippines. You must read it and see how much good your check has done."

Then followed the unfolding of a paper.

Peter crossed to the window; the days were getting short, and the sun was sinking behind a bank of clouds; he read for a few seconds, and then exclaimed:

"Why, this isn't from the Philippine fellow. I can't make head or tail of it!"

"Yes, it is," cried Dovey, eagerly. "Go on over the page, and you will see."

There was something in the strain of her voice that roused Nell's suspicion—something that made her guess that Peter was reading Charley's letter, and that Dovey had contrived the whole thing. Deceitful, abominable Dovey! And Peter was just as bad if he went on reading another word. He must know by this time that it was not from a missionary! The man was a cad—he did not understand the word honor as she understood it. She came a few steps into the room and fixed her indignant eyes on Peter, as he stood reading what she instantly recognized as the lost letter.

The room was in shadow, but the after glow of the sunset illuminated his countenance as he leaned against the side of the window, and betrayed its varying expression. A look of surprise gave place to one of rage, and the hand that held the paper shook. Dovey, sitting beside the tea tray, could not repress a smile of triumph.

Nell, who had only waited to make sure that Peter was going on reading her letter to the end, now swept past Dovey, and confronted him. He was so absorbed that he didn't notice her till she touched his arm.

"You know that is not intended for you," she said; and she cared little that her tone was insulting. "Are you in the habit of reading other people's letters?"

His sullen face flushed with fury.

"When they are love letters—written by other men to my promised wife"—the words fairly hissed—"I treat them so—and so!" and he tore the letter into fragments.

Nell was quite unused to any coarse exhibition of temper, and Peter's rage seemed grotesque and repulsive, so that it required a moment's reflection to make her see that an explanation was due to him.

"Nothing can excuse your behavior," she answered; "a man of honor would have scorned such a meanness; but I am glad you have forced me to recognize the truth. We could never be happy together. I did honestly hope to learn to care for you, Peter; and since I have been engaged to you I have never been

disloyal to my promise. It was through no fault of mine that letter was written; but I see now I did wrong to engage myself to you, for I love Charley Beaumont with all my soul, and the attempt to tear him out of my heart was killing me by inches. I give you back your word and your ring"—here she drew it from her finger and laid it gently in his hand—"you are free, Peter. I wouldn't marry you now to save my father from death, much less from failure."

Peter's sneer was quite as disagreeable as his anger. He poured out his recriminations in a cold, mocking tone with a rapidity that gave Nell no chance to interpose a word of dissent. He told her it was vastly pretty to talk about keeping her promise, and then pick a quarrel on such flimsy ground as his reading an unaddressed letter; that he understood quite well that he had been cajoled into tiding Thraxton & Co. over a tight place, and was now to be thrown aside when her old lover suddenly found himself in funds; but he could tell her that sort of thing was not to be indulged in with impunity—here he seized her arm, and almost whistled through his clinched teeth:

"Take your choice," he said, "either beg my pardon here and now, or I will recall my loan to your father, and Thraxton & Co. can go to the devil—where they ought to have been a month ago!"

The excitement was so intense that neither Nell nor Wray heard a carriage drive up, nor noticed Mr. Thraxton standing in the door—an amazed witness of Peter's violence.

The elder man was quite a match for Wray in temper.

"Drop my daughter's arm, if you please, Mr. Wray," he said, haughtily. "The very great service you rendered me last month is hardly an excuse for bullying a woman. I am happy to say I am able to repay your loan with interest. Thank Heaven, I saw you in

your true character before I let my daughter marry a cad!"

Nell ran to her father, and threw herself upon his breast. There had never been much sympathy between them; but his unexpected kindness warmed her heart.

"I am so sorry, papa," she cried. "I know I am bringing ruin upon you; but I couldn't bear it any longer! Try to forgive me!"

"You haven't ruined me," he said, ignoring Peter. "We have had a most successful week in stocks, and had arranged to settle with Mr. Wray irrespective of this. Besides, we have just doubled our capital by taking into the firm a new partner, Richmond Beaumont's nephew—you used to know him, Nell—and I brought him down with me to spend Sunday. By the way, where is he? I left him standing in the hall and forgot all about him in this unpleasant scene."

At this announcement of Charley Beaumont's presence in the house, Peter bounded to the door as if he intended to make mincemeat of his rival; but Dovey laid a restraining hand on his shoulder.

"Dear Mr. Wray," she cooed, "don't do anything rash. You have been betrayed by a family who pretend to be honorable, and are simply unscrupulous. Your own dignity requires you to break your engagement with Miss Thraxton after her disgraceful conduct—but the world will hold you blameless. I shall take good care to let our friends know that you were obliged to throw her over upon discovering her perfidy. I shall not, myself, spend another night under their roof, but will join my brother at the club. If you will wait for me outside, till I change my dress, we can walk over together."

And so Dovey and Peter disappeared in the twilight; while Nell, with her hand in Charley Beaumont's, watched the night creep on.



THE SUMMER GIRL

By Dorothy Dix



Y dear child," I said to Maud, when she came to bid me good-by as she was starting off with her mother for a round of the fashionable summer resorts, "have you decided how you are going to conduct your summer campaign?"

"How am I going to conduct my summer campaign?" she repeated after me, in amazement.

"Yes," I said; "it takes more than a trunk full of pretty clothes; it takes sense, and tact, and good nature, and all the cardinal virtues to make a successful summer girl. There ought to be a book written about it—'The Summer Girls' Handy Manual,' you know, or something like that."

"What would you advise?" she asked.

I had advice to offer, and it was substantially as follows:

You want to be admired and have attention, of course. Every girl does; and I would remind you at the very beginning of the old proverb which says nothing succeeds like success. There is about men a certain sheeplike quality that makes them invariably follow the leader when it comes to paying attention to a woman. A man may be cocksure of his judgment on every other subject on earth. He may feel that he could settle the Philippine question with his left hand, and straighten out the Chinese imbroglio while you waited; but he requires to have some other man's good opinion to bolster up his, and confirm his views about a woman. It is for this reason that to the summer girl who hath shall be given other beaux even more abundantly, and to her who hath

not shall be taken away even the one lone man she hath ensnared.

Such being the case, govern yourself accordingly. Assume an air of assured belledom and accustomed admiration. Don't look flustered and happy because some man asks you to take a walk. Never dance with another girl. It proclaims to all, you see, that you have been overlooked and passed by. It is the self confession of a wallflower. I once knew a discreet mother who, when her daughters were away on visits, invariably pursued them with boxes of candy and violets—ostensibly the offerings of suitors at home. It was tremendously effective, and established their reputation for belledom; but, alas! not every girl is blessed with an invaluable mamma who knows the ropes.

Another thing that I would impress upon you is the importance of deciding what sort of summer girl you are going to be. This may sound a bit startling at first, but consider it a moment. The first requisite of success in any line is to decide on a career. This is the day of specialists. Nobody would expect one man to be eminent as a lawyer and a doctor and a greengrocer. It is just as absurd for any girl to imagine she is an all-round charmer, equally effective in every rôle. It takes airy-fairy women like Maud Adams and Adelaide Thurston—light as blown thistledown—to play *Lady Babbie*. We want grand Modjeskas, not little soubrettes, for our *Lady Macbeths*. Nothing is considered more important in a play than for an actor to look the part; and I am never so despairing of my sex as when I observe how luminous and continual is the lesson the stage offers on this point, and how

slow and dense we are in accepting it. Look about you on every side for the illustration. It is not only that we continually wear clothes that were intended for other people. We get cast into rôles that are misfits. See the dull women who are posing as literary; the quiet ones who are making strenuous efforts to appear gay and dashing, and, God help us! the big, fat ones who try to be kittenish and only succeed in looking like performing elephants. It is enough to make one weep. Thus I abjure you to find out your own class. Get in it. Play in it.

Another thing I would suggest as a good campaign document is the sentiment of the song which says, "There are others"; and I would add that occasionally the rights of these others should receive attention at the hands of the summer girl. For downright, unadulterated selfishness and lack of consideration of others commend me to a pretty girl who looks as if she couldn't say "boo!" to a goose. She monopolizes the shady corners of the hotel galleries; she wakes the whole house up by singing in the parlor after midnight; she shows her power over men by making them fetch and carry. But, my dear girl, the worm will turn at last. The selfish girl poaches on everyone's preserves, since we are all more or less selfish, and so the coterie that sits in judgment on the hotel porch turns upon her and rends her limb from limb.

Another thing I would recall to the memory of the summer girl is that women rule society, and that it is not safe to snub the matrons who do fancy work on the galleries, or the homely girls who sit about the walls in the ball-room. Reflect that the married and elderly women do the entertaining, when society is really in blast in the winter, and that the homeliest girl may have eligible brothers. Men may pay you compliments, but their mothers and sisters make out the ball lists. Anyway, it is a silly pose for a girl to affect to disdain the good opinion of her sex. Once let it be said of a girl, "Oh, the men like her, but the women fight shy of her," and it's like the lightest touch

on a magnolia petal. Nothing in heaven or earth will ever make it quite white again.

Remember also, my dear girl, that the summer season is a season of rest, when people don't want to be talked to death. What fiend first suggested that girls could make themselves irresistibly fascinating by a never-ending flow of words? Never was a greater fallacy. The natural man loves the sound of his own voice. He doesn't want to be talked to; he wants to talk. Listen to him. Let him explain his solution of the money question. Encourage him to tell you about his wheel, his dog, his college record—and you have a fish on the line you can play as long as you find the sport agreeable.

If by any mischance you should be witty and have a knack of repartee, send your bright thoughts to the comic papers, choke 'em down, do anything with 'em but speak them out in company. Many a woman has cut her throat with her own wit. Women hate her. Men fear her. Nobody likes to feel, when he goes, he leaves his character behind him.

Don't be too hard to please. Kicking is a distinctively masculine prerogative. A disgruntled, dissatisfied, fretful woman is something that strikes terror to the boldest heart. Don't always be drawing comparisons. If, with infinite trouble, some young man manages to hire the solitary buckboard or the dilapidated carryall of the summer hotel, don't enliven the occasions with reminiscences of the time you went on somebody's four-in-hand and had such a love of a time. If somebody gets up a sandwich and beer supper, and invites you, don't turn up your nose and say you can't eat anything but birds and champagne. There is no other feminine charm equal to adaptability. The girl who can do anything, is ready for anything, who is willing to be pleased with everything that comes along, can give the spoilt beauty odds in the game and beat her every time. She is the one who is never left out when the hay rides and fishing excursions and tenpin parties are made up.

As regards the athletic business, I would counsel a happy medium. Be athletic, but not too athletic. The time has gone—heaven be praised!—when it was considered interesting for a woman to be unable to walk for a quarter of a mile, and for her to have to be dragged up every hill; but the modern girl is in danger of overdoing things on the opposite side of the question. The girl who has to be always doing something fatiguing, who can't be happy unless she is jumping around in the heat after a tennis ball or scorching somewhere on her wheel, is a terror beside whom the lackadaisical sister of the past was a peach. As you are strong, be merciful. Be ready to go on short excursions when you are asked, but don't develop a mania for flagging the mountain, or exploring the country, or hunting for grubby and buggy plants, and expect any man to go with you. If you do, you are liable to find yourself deserted for the discreet damsel who stays on the veranda of the hotel and keeps her hair in curl. Also, bear in mind that the bicycle is fatal to beauty. The Venus de Milo would come off of a five-mile run looking like a red-faced Irish washerwoman. Still, you have always this consolation: An affection that withstands a wheeling trip is built on the rock of ages, and nothing else in life is liable to even jar it.

"Everything is fair in love and war;" and at summer resorts this has long been a favorite motto with the girl who, knowing it, tries to monopolize every man who comes along. She takes him off for long solitary walks, and inveigles him into *tête-à-têtes*, and wild horses couldn't drag her into introducing him to another girl. It is a fatal mistake. He sets her down as selfish, and jealous, and, worse than all, she bores him to death. My dear child, no one person is the whole show in life. Two strangers can have little to say to each other, whereas the introduction of others into the conversation makes everything smooth sailing. It is better to be one of a charming group than a solitary bore. Never keep a man with you after he begins to get tired. Get tired yourself first. Anticipate the being bored

feeling, and send him off; and the chances are he will hunt you up the next opportunity, because he will not be afraid of getting caught and having to stay.

Don't hint. The poor summer-resort young man is seldom a disguised millionaire. He is only an impecunious wretch who has all he can do to buy a few pairs of white duck trousers and a handful of neckties and give himself a couple of weeks off somewhere. Learn to pass the seductive soda-water counter without a yearning glance. Cultivate a distaste for ice cream, and don't imitate those young women of diabolical ingenuity who spend the summer getting up something that costs money for the heathen. Charity begins at home in not fleecing the poor, downtrodden young men who do their humble best in dancing parties all winter, and helping out at teas.

Be amiable. People may laugh at your sharp speeches before your face, but they will call you a cat behind your back. The world's *bête noir* is a high-tempered woman. It dreads her, it fears her, and it shelves her. The amiable, sunny-tempered, unexact girl, who has a good word for other girls and is willing to divide her beaux and her chocolate creams, is always the one whose engagement we read of in the society column of the papers.

Also, my dear girl, remember that the world is a very little place, and everywhere uncomfortably close together. Your little escapades at the seaside or mountain will be told in town with amendments and embellishments. Don't flirt with the floorwalker, off for his vacation, and not expect him to nudge his fellow-clerks and tell them you were the summer girl he had such fun with during his holidays. Human nature is weak, and prone to "come back" at you. Don't let the amateur photographer take you in a silly and sentimental attitude with some stray summer man. It's awfully funny at the time; but the eligible young man to whom you are engaged may be deficient in a sense of humor and fail to see it in a comely light.

A Santa Barbara Hide and Seek

By Lucia Chamberlain



HE desire of the actor to see the play through the eyes of the audience is an ill-considered, but a well-recognized, impulse. Such a reflection flitted through my mind as I pressed the electric bell.

James, who recognized me in spite of Indian tan and Italian flesh, let me in with a murmur that the party was on the piazza.

I crossed the empty drawing room, entered the deserted dining room, where the round table still carried the confusion of the last course. The glass doors that gave upon the veranda were open, and the breeze stirring through brought whiffs of jessamine. After the San Francisco winds, this Santa Barbara night seemed tropical.

Immediately upon the other side of the glass, and under the bowering vines, my cousin, the hostess of the occasion, sat, swinging softly in a wicker rocking-chair, the light from the dining room falling on her fluffy head and bare neck, and catching the sparkle of the buckle of her small shoe. No other individual was in sight. No one appeared to be walking in the garden. The open grass plots fell away in gentle slopes toward the thickets of oaks and willows, where nothing stirred. In the midst of the lawns a solitary palm shot up a straight shaft, its crown of leaves sharp cut upon the sky. The severe lines of the trees, the milky ring of the marble fountain, the high, clipped hedges inclosing it, were classic.

Motionless under the May moon, the garden looked clear cut as a cameo.

But the "party" quoted by the admirable James—where was it?

The deep heart of the rhododendron bush rustled. A low, cautious call sounded across the lawn. A signal answered from the hedges.

The glass door squeaked as I pushed it wider to step out.

My cousin Sophie jumped.

"James," she began, with her "to-servants-only" manner. Then she got my face in the half light. "Garry, you dear!"

I said as much of her—more, in fact. Still, she held my hands in the face of the garden, while she asked me how was London, and why hadn't I come to dinner as she had required.

I replied, in sequence, that London, being behind, was forgotten; and, myself but four hours on land from the roughest coast trip I could remember, I thought it wise to dine at the club on a brandy-and-soda.

"Besides," I argued, "I know you hate an 'extra' man."

"Yes," she assented, "and your place made thirteen; so you see how much we wanted you."

"We?"

"I hope you haven't forgotten Lily," she reproached me.

With trepidation I recognized her matchmaking smile, and dodged.

"My dear cousin, how can a man, looking you in the face, remember that you have a half-grown daughter?"

"Ah, she's quite grown up now! She's out. You will find her very charming."

Her look assured me that I would find her daughter more than charming; but Sophie, as a cousin, was so delightful that I refused to contemplate her as a mother-in-law.

"Then why isn't Lily here to greet

her old cousin?" I demanded, with proper injury. "Now that I am arrived, would you mind telling me how you have made away with all our guests?"

She laughed a little as she reseated herself. "You should have come earlier," she replied.

"All very well to envelop yourself in mystery, but I'm suspicious. You appear a witch, who, having transformed her guests to trees, sits contemplating her success. Or what, my dear cousin, is the meaning of this wild-eyed man wandering lostly over your garden beds, and diving into the bushes? Is he the only survivor, and has the spell merely made him mad?"

Her eyes followed the direction of mine. "Don't be a goose," she smiled. "It's a game."

"So I had supposed," I replied, severely.

"It's not mine," she repudiated, reading my implication. "It's hers." She laughed again.

Here the man emerged from the bamboos, and strode across the open lawn, peering right and left.

"Whom does he suspect?" I whispered.

"Sh-h!" said my cousin. "Look!"

Something white trembled up out of the rhododendron leaves, slipped like moonlight through the bushes. I caught the charming slope of the neck, the stealing stoop of the slender shape.

"He didn't see her!" said Sophie, sinking back.

"White magic?" I whispered.

The willows were violently agitated. The stalker wheeled as if he were shot.

"I can't think what got into them," Sophie repeated, indulgently. "They've been like this from the first. Dinners are such odd things! One never knows how they will go."

I was yet in polite suspense.

"Sometimes they are so dreadfully dull," my cousin pursued, "even with the brightest people. And again they seem possessed. To-night went off like a shot. We were rather wild at table, and afterward some one——"

"You?" I suggested.

"No." She was firm there. "Georgina Cotter suggested 'hide and seek.'"

"Clever Miss Cotter!" I exclaimed.

She looked at me attentively.

"Do you know her?" she asked.

"My dear child, isn't it my hard luck not to know any of your charming Santa Barbara circle? As yet I am all hope."

"Georgina," Sophie pursued, "was especially possessed."

I agreed with my cousin. Again she looked attentive.

"How do you know?" she inquired.

"Anyone who would suggest 'hide and seek'——" I began.

"It was merely her high spirits," Sophie replied, the least bit anxiously. "She was quite wild with the idea. She got everyone out on the lawn, and counted off a long rigamarole I learned in my child schooldays. And Mr. Thompson was 'it.'"

"He looks the part," I murmured; "but what, if I may be so bold, has become of Miss Cotter?" I mendaciously inquired.

"She's still hiding. I think she'll be caught." My cousin was notably alert.

The thickets had suddenly sprouted people. The garden flashed out like a kaleidoscope. One white, noiseless shape, stealing around the outskirts of the scramble, I knew for Georgina, even before Sophie pointed her out. Trailing, tender, tremulous, this little ghost slipped from bush to bush, slid under the boughs of the flowering cherry, and from this nearest shelter made one false start, fluttered back, darted out again, straight for the palm, and was caught. It looked to me suspiciously like a feint in the open to draw the enemy. I could not resist applauding. Georgina seemed to look attentively toward the piazza. I drew my chair into the jessamine shadow. Sophie leaned back with a sigh very like suppressed excitement. I had seen her less concerned on more intense occasions. While Georgina was counting, with her face to the palm and her eyes, presumably, closed, and the players were dispersing for concealment, I whispered to my cousin:

"Do you know, this doesn't look to me due to high spirits."

She rather stared.

"It looks to me like a plot."

She actually changed color—a rare change in Sophie.

"What do you mean?" she inquired, a bit sharply.

"You know," I replied, significantly.

"Of course, it's all very well to put this affair"—and my hand comprehended the garden and all it concealed—"on the shoulders of a child like Georgina, who couldn't have a scheme in her head. But what I think you might do is to tell a fellow what you are up to. You always used, you know. I'm sure to find out some way."

She looked flattered, and annoyed. "I'm not plotting anything," she said, with the slightest possible accent on the pronoun.

"Ah!" I said, incredulously. "Who, then?"

She hesitated.

"You know you're dying to tell some one," I urged.

"Well, it's not my plot," she reiterated, with something like defiance. "I can't tell it. And you wouldn't believe me if I did."

"I dare you!"

She never could take a dare.

"Georgina!" she breathed.

"No! Really? I should never have suspected her of a plot."

"What do you know about her?" said Sophie, suspiciously.

I replied cautiously: "She appears so very naïve and young—surely not capable of a stratagem that could set in motion such numbers of people."

"She's capable of a great variety of things," replied Sophie, sententiously. "She's anything but naïve."

"Well?"

"The trouble is"—Sophie drew her chair a little closer to mine—"I've promised not to tell a soul!"

"You won't," I reassured her. "As a soul, I am absolutely *nil*. As an intelligence, I'm an abyss. What drops in never sees the light."

"The child is in love," said Sophie, studying the sticks of her fan.

"Delightful!"

"I don't think Georgina has found it so," replied Sophie.

"You surprise me!"

"At least, she has had a horrid time, and I hope"—Sophie seemed to weigh her words—"I hope she is not going to have a worse one."

"You concern me!" I remonstrated.

"She is going to elope," said my cousin, observing my face.

"What!" I cried.

"There's nothing to be shocked about. It's quite correct," she said, a trifle resentfully.

I endeavored to subdue my expression. "Of course, if you're backing it——"

"I couldn't help myself. I'm very fond of Georgie, but I've had such a time keeping it from Lily!" She sighed. "A young girl is a great responsibility. I wish"—she gave me a tentative look—"well," she finished, "you seem so much one of the family that I hardly feel as if I were giving Georgina away in telling you. You see"—she was fairly nestled to her story—"last winter, while she was in Venice with her aunt, they met an actor——"

"French or Italian?" I inquired, with resignation.

"Neither, Irish."

"Ye gods! Mine own countryman! What wonder?"

"Don't be silly! Everyone takes you for an Englishman; and, from what I've gotten out of Georgie, this one's a perfect Mick."

"You've seen him?"

"N-no, not yet. Oh, I dare say he's all right; but he's an actor, and you know how they are."

"My dear cousin, you forget. I am an *artiste* of opera, which knows nothing of acting—rather scorns it."

"I wish," said Sophie, plaintively, "that you wouldn't insist in comparing yourself to such persons. He may be very interesting, but—well, he's not a bit your sort. Besides, you sing mostly in concert."

"When at all," I supplemented; "but if you've never seen him——"

"Oh, I've heard! From what they

say"—she used the collective magnificently—"at least, from what Georgie's aunt said, the child lost her head completely over him, and he"—my cousin hung poised a moment, then hurled the damning evidence—"he encouraged her to carry on with him!"

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "What a brute!"

She eyed me narrowly.

"And just what do you suppose Miss Cotter's aunt meant by 'carrying on'?" I pursued. "Losing themselves in Saint Mark's, and gondoliering together, and lurching alone in the piazzeta?"

"You seem to know a good deal about it," observed my cousin, dryly. "Yes, I suppose that was it. But what she especially objected to was the man's in-consequence and unreliability, and the absolute way in which Georgie trusted him." This was gratifying. "She—the aunt—grew quite worried for fear he might be one of those people who have impossible wives tucked out of sight. So she wrote to Mr. Cotter about it."

"Rather nasty of the old lady, eh?" I suggested.

"It was," Sophie assented. "But *she* was *nothing* compared to Mr. Cotter. *He* was furious. He cabled them to return at once. He cabled twice before he got an answer. Then it was a wire from that wild Irishman—a proposal for Georgina."

"Rather clever," I commented.

"Crazy," said my cousin. "Cotter wouldn't listen to it for a moment; and the end of it was that Georgie had to pack home, leaving the man in Venice. It seems he wrote Mr. Cotter the day Georgina left Brindisi, so she and the letter reached him almost simultaneously."

"She told you a good deal, didn't she?" I inquired.

"She had to confide in some one," said Sophie, haughtily.

"True," I admitted. "Did she happen to say why her father so strenuously objected to this Venetian-Irish actor?"

"Just for those three reasons. Mr. Cotter is an American, who has never been out of America—in short, thinks

the Continent sinful—who is also an inventor, the inventor of that 'patent, portable, folding bath' they've been imposing on the British public."

"Ah, yes; I've heard of it," I replied, with satisfaction. "It leaks."

"Well," said Sophie, "then you can understand how that sort of man would not approve of actors in general, and this one in particular, especially as he's set his heart on Georgie's marrying Fred Clement."

"Ha!" said I.

"They've been practically engaged ever since Georgina went to boarding school," Sophie explained.

"What do you mean by practically?"

"Oh, you know—it's been arranged forever. So, when Mr. Cotter got that letter from Brindisi, he simply raved! But he couldn't frighten Georgie. She looks as if a breath would blow her away, but she's like her father when her mind is made up, and she was simply determined to marry that man."

"Which?"

"Why, the one she couldn't have, of course—the actor. She doesn't care a fig for Clement. But, you see, she is under age, and when her father found out the man had the impudence to follow her out here, he told Georgie she couldn't see him."

"By the way, what was his name?" I threw in.

Sophie was dignified. "Do you suppose I will tell you that?"

"You don't know it," I asserted, confidently.

She flushed. "Garry, that's not nice of you."

"Rather nice of her, though," I replied.

"This affair was none of my seeking," retorted Sophie. "Georgie carried it to me, and I listened only to what was necessary."

"Cotter's heard the name, I suppose?" I persisted.

"Of course," said Sophie, irritably; "but he's so frightfully ashamed of the whole affair he won't speak it."

"Admirable! So no one knows?"

"The name—no. But the affair is common property."

"And the man?"

Sophie frowned. "His behavior, to my mind, has been rather peculiar. Instead of coming directly here and seeing Mr. Cotter man to man, he went to San Francisco, and from there he wrote to Georgie."

"The diplomacy of my countrymen!" I murmured.

"What do you mean?"

"From what you say of Cotter's state of mind, seeing him would be a useless formality. And, under the circumstances, don't you see how he scores in remaining unknown?"

"Do you think so?" she asked.

"It's as plain to me as day," I replied, confidently.

"Well, I hope so! At any rate, they evolved a scheme, between them, to meet; but Mr. Cotter got wind of the fact that the man was coming to Santa Barbara, and he absolutely wouldn't let Georgina out of his sight. He accompanied her everywhere. The poor child was nearly beside herself with trying to find some loophole of escape. And finally she came to me with this"—Sophie waved her hand at the garden—"hide and seek. My dinner invitation had suggested it to her. Mr. Cotter let her come with Clement, but insisted on calling for her himself."

I glanced over my shoulder at the glass door. "Oh, so she has to shake Clement?"

"Yes, that's the plot. Do you remember the old gate at the end of the cypress walk?"

"Shall I ever forget it?" I cried.

"Don't be silly. It's been nailed up for six years," said Sophie. "I had the nails taken out to-day, and the hinges fixed."

"Bully girl!" I cried, patting her arm. "And there was to be a cab with an Irish actor in it at the gate, at an appointed hour, and the little girl could easily slip out of the drawing room into the garden——"

"That's just what she couldn't," declared Sophie, "as long as Fred Clement had an eye on her. That's why she invented the hide and seek. She started them all off at table, in the first place.

We were in a gale the whole time. She flirted furiously with Clement."

"Was that necessary?" I inquired.

"Oh, quite. So that by the time we left the table, we were behaving like children—and then it was that she got them out on the lawn, and proposed the hide and seek. They were ready for anything. The plan was, that after they were well started, Georgie first was to get herself caught, so as to be 'it,' and *then* to catch Fred Clement."

"But how?" I said.

"Why, of course, she peeked."

I looked out at the artless Georgina straying slimly about the lawn, never too far from the palm.

"And while Clement is 'it'?" I prompted.

"She is off," finished Sophie, "through the lower gate, into the carriage with her wild Irishman, and away to Father MacKye like mad!"

"Brava!" I cried. "But suppose the good father objects?"

"I have arranged that," Sophie replied, significantly.

"Wonderful woman!" I ejaculated. "Would you do as much for Lily?"

"Good heavens! no!" cried Sophie, in horror. And added, more mildly: "There's just one thing that worries me. Suppose he should fail her!"

"Madam," I remonstrated, "you suggest the impossible! One of my countrymen fail a lady at such a pinch! No Irishman ever was late to an elopement. He'll be there!"

"I hope so," said Sophie, fidgeting, and watching the lawn.

The concealed were being routed from cover. Clement appeared from the bamboos, running for base across a fair field. Then, from the orange trees between him and the palm, slid Georgina, who, fleeing six paces ahead of him, clasped the palm trunk, and triumphantly proclaimed the capture.

"This is the beginning," whispered Sophie, excitedly. "Isn't it like watching a play?"

I was, indeed, watching Georgina.

"I *do* wish they'd hurry," murmured Sophie, as the players straggled toward the palm. "It would be so awkward

if Mr. Cotter should come in in the middle."

"Beastly!" I assented.

"Is that James in the dining room?" she asked, nervously.

"It is," I replied; "but I regret to say he is followed."

She half rose, as the glass door squeaked. A stoutish, oldish gentleman, with a deeply bored expression, stepped upon the piazza.

"Oh, Mr. Cotter!" Sophie got it out without a tremor. This was more than I had expected, and had the prospect of getting much worse. Mr. Cotter's eye, taking in the scene presented by the *tête-à-tête* on the piazza, and the disorderly assembly under the palm, lost its weary indifference in suspicion.

"What is the matter?" he deferred to Sophie. "Is anyone hurt?"

"Oh, no, dear Mr. Cotter!" Sophie cried; and I listened to her mellifluous tones gracefully explaining the charming little game she had proposed to her guests. Sophie is really the best sort of a friend; I had a keen regret that I must presently lose her regard. But, in spite of her diplomacy, Cotter lowered.

"Hide and seek!" he ejaculated. "Damn disorderly, Mrs. Lacy, damn disorderly! Shouldn't have thought it. Where's Georgie? Where's my girl?"

"She's—er—hiding," Sophie explained. The group about the palm was already scattering in the direction of the covert, leaving Clement by the palm, eyes shut, helplessly "it." At the moment Sophie spoke, Georgina crossed the lawn toward the willows, and, going, looked back at the piazza and kissed her hand. Her composure was perfect. Cotter made as if to descend the step.

"Oh, Mr. Cotter," Sophie's finger was on my arm. So I was to be cast into the breach, was I?

"I want you to meet my cousin——"

"My dear Mr. Cotter," I interrupted, in a voice that drowned the tail of Sophie's sentence—"my dear Mr. Cotter, I am delighted at this opportunity to speak with one of whom I have heard so much for the past year—of whom, in fact, my friend Cheswick cannot tell me too much!"

I had seized his hand at the beginning of the sentence, and I kept hold of it straight through; but at the name of our mutual friend I saw physical detention was no longer necessary.

"You know Cheswick?" he demanded, doubtfully.

"We were boys together," I cried. "His interests are my interests. So, when in London last winter, he introduced me to the 'Cotter patent, portable, folding bath,' I gave it my attention—though invention is hardly in my line."

Sophie was staring at me. She has always maintained that I am disobliging, and my present attitude puzzled her.

"But," I continued, wiping my rather damp forehead, "my pleasure in meeting you is not wholly due to the merits and ingenuity of that extraordinary invention."

By this time Cotter's back was to the lawn. "Well, you're the first Englishman that's talked sense about that patent," he declared.

Sophie gave me a triumphant glance over the mistake of my nationality that nearly tempted a brogue out of me.

"Sir," I replied, "the ingenuity of your invention impresses sense on the dullest mind. As for the London sales—— But suppose we step into the dining room."

"Do!" cried Sophie, readily, "and James shall bring the sherry."

Cotter followed her through the glass door. I looked back at the garden. By the palm stood the solitary figure of Clement, counting stentoriously. The willows revealed not even a flicker of white.

"Pardon me one moment," I said to Cotter and Sophie.

I passed through the drawing room. I closed the hall door after me. I stepped outside without my hat. The evening was clear, marvelous, with a young moon above the cypresses. Cotter's coupé was at the drive entrance. "You need not wait," I said to the man, and as he droye in one direction I ran in the other. As I turned the corner of the street—it was little more than a country road—I heard the house door

open. They must have heard the carriage drive away! I followed the shadow of the high garden hedge to where the oaks and willows overhung it—to where a cab waited inconspicuously in the shadow.

I opened the door. The carriage was yet empty. I peered anxiously over the gate. The hinges were new. Dear Sophie! Something white darted under the willows. I opened the gate. I caught Georgina up in my arms, and thrust her into the carriage. I sprang in after her. The door slammed, and the wheels flew.

"How could you!" she cried. "If they had found you out! What *were* you doing?"

"Saying farewell to a friend, and meeting a father-in-law," I replied. "I thought in either case it might be my last chance."

"Will they ever forgive us?" she despaired.

"Probably," I reassured her. "But suppose they don't"—I whispered it through her hair—"isn't this worth it?"

Her reply from my shoulder was inaudible, but somehow acquiescent.



AUGUST IN THE CITY

THE brooding hours, through the dull afternoon,

Pause, while a torrid sun flames in the sky.
(O heart of mine, dream of a long, cool dune,
Where breezes wander by!)

Hemmed in by granite walls, the very paves
Grow worn and weary with the ceaseless heat.
(O heart, dream of a shore where foam-flecked waves
Surge, crash and wildly beat!)

The sad hours creep toward the dim light of dusk—
Ah, how each lagging moment slowly goes!—
(O heart, dream of a garden filled with musk
And the sweet scent of rose!)

The sun goes down at last, and lo! a breeze
Pours through the mighty cavern of the streets,
(O sleeping heart, dream of unsheltered seas,
Where the glad, fresh rain beats!)

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

SERENA'S INTERLUDE

By Anne O'Hagan



FOR some days Walden had been inclined to doubt his wisdom in making one of the coaching party. This morning he was convinced of his folly.

He stood alone on the edge of the canyon of the Yellowstone, the river shining, a vivid ribbon of blue, at the foot of the great, variegated walls of the gorge. Two or three hundred feet back upon the plateau the tents of his party gleamed white in the cloudless sunshine, the coach and the provision wagon outlining the back of the encampment, the horses safely picketed near by. He could see Serena's sister, Mrs. Wright, lying in the hammock, and sentimental Miss Martha Arkwright reading aloud to her. What sort of women were these, he wondered impatiently, who traveled thousands of miles into the midst of miracles to swing in hammocks and to read? The men had all disappeared—the men and Serena.

He knew well enough what Serena was doing. Indeed, she had perfunctorily asked him to come with her and Bud Munro to the little, rock-guarded pool where the waters, rushing on their way to the first cascade, broadened out an instant to make a shadowed stillness for the trout. He had declined—he hoped not too ungraciously. He had wanted to be alone for a little while to review the situation.

They had been engaged three months—he and Serena. He loved her with all the ardor of which he was capable; he had sometimes believed that he was not of a very inflammable nature. He loved her with all the tenderness, the devotion

and the doggedness in him; and of these qualities he knew that he had more than the average share. He estimated himself modestly; he was not in the first flush of youth, he was not an Adonis. Ordinarily, he would not have considered either of these facts damning; but to-day he was comparing his stock with that of Bud Munro—lithe, as much at home upon the back of a little, half-broken broncho as upon his feet, drawling, laughing, irresponsible as youth itself, radiating the very life of the wilderness, the free airs, the fire and fervor of the great stars. A primitive being he was, of course; but women, as Walden knew in a sudden flash of jealous inspiration, were primitive creatures, all of them, no matter how civilized, how overlaid with cultures and refinements.

When he had enunciated this great, unconsoling truth to himself, Walden hated his forbears, who had made him what he was—the scion of a family eminent, at least, in respectability; a citizen with a high sense of the duties of citizenship; a lawyer with a keenly trained legal intelligence.

"A perfectly proper muff!" he concluded, irately.

Something blended with the wide morning air, the sunshine, the dazzling play of color upon the walls of the canyon, the sound of the waters. It was laughter, young, free—the laughter of Serena and the assistant guide—the eternal duet of joy which had been ringing ever since the party had been a day out from Cinnabar. Now the duet resolved itself suddenly, the tenor trailing away toward the tents, the contralto losing something of its poignant gladness as it came on toward him.

"Oh, you missed it!" cried Serena. "They were as gamy as anything you ever saw. I caught one on a throw of sixty feet—sixty feet, or, anyway, it was thirty—and it was a seven-pounder. I did, indeed, Van."

She was tall and slight, and there was a swaying grace in her figure which the abbreviated lines of her short corduroy skirt could scarcely damage. Her shirt-waist, dust-colored like her skirt, was turned back at her throat, sailor-fashion, and a scarlet sailor knot gave the one strong bit of color in her get-up. Her smooth, pale skin was delicately tanned, so that it melted into the color of her frock. Her eyes, with the changing violet and green lights of dark gray, smiled out of a tangle of thick lashes. They were wonderful eyes, Walden thought, with their eagerness and wistfulness.

His heart, troubled with love and jealousy, beat furiously against his side. His mind was full of words of adoration, of rage, of endearment—words that he had never before guessed to be part of his vocabulary. What he said was:

"What fly did you use?"

"The yellow-brown coachman," answered Serena, with animation. "We've had the best all-around luck with it, I think. Don't you?"

"I forget. Oh, yes, I dare say," replied Walden, stupidly.

She sat down on the rock beside him, unfastening her brown sombrero. Her dark hair, crinkling in its orderly coils, caught lights of red and gold. Its prettiness stirred Walden hungrily. Then he remembered the thick, wavy thatch of sun-bleached brown above Munro's untroubled brow and laughing eyes, and again he hated the civilized ancestors and the civilized life that had endowed him, at thirty-nine, with thinning, drab-bish locks.

Serena sighed. It was a sigh that breathed the very perfection of satisfaction. She looked along the canyon. Her eyes filled themselves with the color of the high, jagged walls, the rose and ivory, the bronze, the purple and the scant, dusty green. The line of living

blue at the foot of the gorge leaped and flashed. She took deep, long, even breaths, her slender, uncramped waist moving gently with her respirations.

"It seems to me that I've never been so happy before, Vance. Have you ever been?"

Walden put the restraints of sanity upon himself, and did not break forth into denunciation of the life of the wild as he fain would have done. But neither did he meet Serena's enthusiasm.

"It is pleasant," he said.

"Pleasant? It is heaven! It's life! Just looking and breathing are enough."

To the jealous mind everything is confirmation of its own fears. Serena's abandon to the influences which only irked him with the sense of his unfitness for them was corroboration of his misgivings. But he was a man of reflection; he was not yet ready to tax her with a wavering allegiance.

"I think," she went on, dreamily, "that I shall begin another diary. You know, I used always to begin one when life was exciting, or beautiful, or ugly—anything out of the usual. Whenever I was wronged by my unappreciative elders, I would begin one as a record. I was so afraid of forgetting my injuries!"

"It isn't injuries this time, I hope, that you want to chronicle?" said Walden, heavily.

"No; it's bliss—pure bliss. Don't misunderstand me," she added, with a mischievous laugh. "It's impersonal bliss. It would be as great if none of you were here."

"I have felt quite sure that you could spare some of us."

Serena turned from the contemplation of the river wall, and gazed at her fiancé in some surprise. Slowly and painfully a blush spread beneath her brown cheeks.

"Have I been nasty, Van?" she asked. It was not her least dangerous characteristic that she atoned for unkindness so sweetly.

"Oh, no; I'm a bit grouchy this morning, that's all. You see the sort of a fellow you're going to marry, Serena.

He can bring his private grievances to the very footstool of the Almighty."

"He should have no private grievances," admonished Serena. "He has a helpmeet in the making, and his first duty is to put all his private grievances upon her. But"—she hurried on against something in Walden's eyes—"don't you want to hear about my diary—my last one?"

"What was the outrage it chronicled?" asked Walden, dutifully.

"I had been kissed."

"Ah! An outrage, you called it?"

"It was not the real outrage. The real outrage was that Aunt Emma sent me to bed—and it was my birthday, too; I was twelve—for chastising the kisser. I can see the record now. It was hideously blotted, and it said: 'Ant' (I disdained the 'u') 'Ant Emma gave me a pink silk dress and a birthday party because I was twelve years old to-day. Tony Dent kissed me, and I slapped his face, and Ant Emma sent me to bed. Grown people have no justice.' That was the record."

Walden's laugh rang through the canyon.

"A literary model," he declared. "Vivid, terse, moral. And what were the other entries?"

"Oh, the next day was habit," answered Serena. "You know how literary persons go on writing from mere custom long after they have anything to say."

"But was there never again a real entry?"

"There was—setting forth that Aunt Emma had put me in the dark closet for telling Mr. Dent how heartily I sympathized with Tony in running away from home upon the advent of a stepmother."

"I'm glad Tony ran away," said Walden. "He occupied too much of your attention."

"Poor Tony!" sighed Serena. "He was ignominiously brought home again. But he and his stepmother did not hit it off, and he was shipped to a preparatory school, and got into all sorts of troubles. He became the family black sheep at a very early age. They lost all track of

him long ago. It's funny," she added, "I've been thinking such a lot of Tony since we started on this trip. I can't imagine why, for I haven't seen him since that year—and I'll give you three guesses as to how long ago it was!"

"It was six years ago," said Walden, firmly. "You're a witch of eighteen."

"It was thirteen," said Serena, "and I'm an A. B. of two thousand!"

"Serena," he cried, impulsively, "tell me, dear. Were you truly never in love before?" The warmth and gentle radiance which her presence always diffused for him had melted his irritated self-criticism of the earlier morning, and left him pleading.

Serena looked at him, wistfulness filling her eyes. She shook her head gently.

"I know I'm a freak, Van," she confessed. "But I never was in love before—if it's in love that I am now. Ah, forgive me! Of course I'm in love now. Haven't I told you a hundred times that there never has been anyone else with whom I wanted to read, and walk, and talk, and——"

"That's not love," he said, roughly.

Serena rose, laughing.

"If I should tell you that some other man was the only one I wished to read and walk and talk with, to order dinners for, and to mend for—you'd think it was love fast enough. Now, wouldn't you?"

"Perhaps I should. But, oh, my dear——"

"And, anyway, if it's despair and fireworks and all that sort of thing you want me to feel, or to have felt—I have. I acknowledge it, Van. Once my heart was broken. Once my tears and sobs——"

"Don't try to make fun, Serena."

"I'm not making fun. Now that you remind me of it, I was madly in love with Tony Dent. I used to meet him on the kitchen roof at the ungodly hour of seven—I was sent to bed at six, after a bread-and-milk supper at five. They all declared it would be good for my complexion, but you see—— He used to call me to the tryst by whistling. The signal was a thrush call, followed im-

mediately by two or three bars from a song Felicia—what possessed mother to give us such joyful names?—that Felicia used to sing a lot to George Wright. Let's see how it went." Serena bent her head on one side, and hummed tentatively for a few minutes. "Ah, yes. Like this:

'I will meet you, I will greet you,
When the roses come again.'

"Never accuse me of a lack of sentiment again, Vance, or I may sing it all to you. Come on over to camp. The men are back from their view hunt."

"Serena—" he began; but Serena had already escaped halfway to the encampment and was signaling Teddy Wright, her irrepressible nephew, in a way incomprehensible to Walden until he recalled that the two were using only sign language at present. He smiled and followed after her.

Walden, inept in matters of physical dexterity, had lamed his bridle wrist. Thus it happened that he had the satisfaction of watching Bud Munro ride off beside Serena along the trail back toward the geysers, which George Wright insisted upon seeing again. Teddy Wright took the assistant guide's place in the camp wagon and plied Shoshone Joe, the half-breed cook and general factotum, with endless questions, while Walden sat in the stage and cursed silently and futilely at his awkwardness, the conversational powers of his companions, and the whole trip.

"Have you and young Munro been in partnership long?" he asked Sam Monk, the guide and driver of the coach. Serena and her cavalier had disappeared around a curve in the road, and he felt that he must talk of the man of whom he felt such an unreasonable jealousy.

"We ain't pardners," said Sam. "I don't remember ever to have laid an eye on him until a day or two before you came. But my pardner, Clemens, he died a month or two back, an' I was sort of lookin' out for some one to take his place, when up comes this feller one day at Livingston. He's got nothin' of an outfit, not even a horse; but he makes

it clear to me he knows this here country like you would know a book, Mr. Walden, an' that he's an all-round handy man on a trip. 'Tain't everyone would fit in to go off like this—ladies an' everything. He's a bit close-mouthed about himself, but if folks was to ask me about my granddaddy I'd be up against it to tell them much. An' there's somethin' kind of takin' about him, ain't there? So we hits it off, him an' me; an' I don't see as any of us has any call to regret it. Good rider, ain't he?" A twist in the road had again brought the horseman and his companion into sight.

"Very," said Walden. He strove to make his tone cordial. Munro was a good rider, he told himself with emphasis—a very good rider, a damned good rider. What of it? Once Serena was back in her own place, out of the intoxication of the air and the heights, he could hold her. It was absurd, anyway, to think that she, daughter of conventions, child of refinements and niceties, could ever incline seriously toward a half-tamed creature like this. Then, with an overpowering pang, came the realization that it was Serena's impulses of which he was jealous, not of her sober judgments.

Meantime the others rode on, exultant life beating in their veins at every bound of their ponies. In her belt Serena had stuck a bunch of white ground phlox he had picked for her not a stone's throw from a half-melted snow bank. What he had said of flowers and ice as he handed them to her she could not remember; but the sense of a compliment, delicate and warming beyond the wont of compliments, remained with her.

She was unlike herself all day, in the abandonment to the flood of gladness and life beating about her. Somewhere beneath the excitement and the rapture of the hour, there lurked a question which she felt she might sometime have to answer—the question of how much of her happiness was the magnificence and the freedom of her surroundings, and how much the joyful sense of intimacy with some one as elemental as the world about her. But the question was scarcely formulated yet.

They had talked, and laughed, and raced themselves into a silence as full of gladness as the music of their speech had been, and were riding along a narrow defile, a jagged wall towering above them on one side, a precipice below, when suddenly Serena's horse reared and plunged. But for a swift, powerful grasp upon her bridle, jerking the pony into instant submission again, she would have been flung she did not know whither. There had been a brief, rasping sound, metallic and ugly. Her pony quivered, even after his four feet had been brought firmly to earth by Bud's strong grasp. She turned her frightened eyes upon the guide. He swung from his horse, seized a small rock, took aim at a thing in the middle of the road ahead of them. Serena covered her eyes. She knew now that it had been a rattlesnake.

"It's all right now," a cheerful voice reassured her. He leaped into the saddle again. "Why, you're shaking all over, aren't you? Don't—don't be afraid. It was only a measly rattler. Don't tremble so, Miss Emerson. It's all over."

He put his gauntleted hand—he had a cowboy's vanity in the matter of his personal belongings—toward her bridle, and his fingers closed upon her shaking ones. There was a sudden singing of the blood in Serena's ears, in her wrists, her fingers—all through her body. She took her other hand from before her eyes and looked at him. Beneath all his tan he was pale. Her fascinated eyes never left his face. Suddenly he straightened himself, and withdrew his hand.

"The first time I've ever seen you timid, Miss Emerson," he said, a little too loudly, a little too commonplacely, to be natural. Serena came out of the trance into which the sudden fright and the sudden rush of new, strong, sweet sensation had plunged her. She shook her shoulders with a little characteristic gesture.

"It's the first terrifying experience I've had," she declared. "Geysers and hot springs and canyons and cascades are all simple enough. But this——"

"But this——" he repeated, and his voice had changed again, and the "this" on which it lingered was not the snake lying dead on the roadside.

Her questions of herself clamored for answer. What was she doing? What was she feeling? Who was this man who moved her so—moved her to the youthfulness she had never felt before, to the abandonment of her reserves, the withdrawal of her standards? Who was this man whose touch could set the heart in her bosom and the pulse in her wrist beating to a new measure?

"Pshaw!" said Serena, very crossly, to herself. "Get excited over a rattlesnake, do! And think it's something else, do!"

She rode hard and straight and fast toward the place appointed for the camping, her gaze directed ahead, her lips unsmiling. Once, noticing the withered white phlox in her belt, she drew it out and made as though to throw it away. Then she stuck it back again, and the guide drew a quick breath of relief.

The moon had risen over the strange, barren basin of the geysers. The camp was pitched for the night; a great fire challenged with its flaring red and orange the white radiance of the skies, the pearl and silver mists of steam arising from the geyser mounds. The coaches had eaten their evening meal with open-air appetites. Silent Sam Monk had been, for once, false to his sobriquet, and talked slowly and ceaselessly of former days in the Yellowstone; he lamented the tide of summer travel, which, he maintained, was crowding the place so that a man could not breathe.

Serena had regained her composure, and, dismissing the incident of the ride from her mind by calling herself a sentimental goose, had become again gay and lighthearted. She sat next to the adoring Teddy in the circle of firelight, half listening to Sam Monk, half enjoying the sensation of well-fed languor.

There was a pause after one of Sam's stories, and then, flutelike and clear, came the call of a thrush. She started. So did Walden, who, from across the

circle, had been watching the play of firelight upon her face. She waited a breathless second, half rising, and again the melodious, full-throated call came; and then, mockingly whistled, the tune she had hummed the day before. The night was full of the mystery of vapors shot with silver, of dark, encircling mountains about the wide plain. And again came the call of the thrush and the bars of the foolish old song.

"Tony! Tony Dent!" cried Serena.

There was no answer. All the circle looked at her.

"Where's Munro?" asked Walden, sharply.

"He's over there seein' to the ropes," drawled Sam. "He didn't relish it for a cent this morning lookin' for that fool horse that broke loose last night. What was that name you said then, Miss Emerson?"

"The call reminded me of one an old playmate of mine used to give," said Serena. "Tony Dent was his name—it's a curious coincidence."

"What on earth ever put that boy into your head, sis?" demanded Felicia.

"It was the signal he used to call me out with, when I was supposed to be safely housed," explained Serena, trying to laugh. But her eyes were fixed upon the horses beyond the tents, and upon the figure dimly moving among them.

"Tony Dent," went on Sam Monk, in slow reflection, as though he had not been interrupted. "Bud"—the assistant wandered toward the firelight circle—"Bud, did you ever hear tell of an Anthony Dent? Because——"

"Anthony Dent? Anthony Dent? There's something very familiar about that name," admitted Munro. He stood looking down upon Serena in the opalescent gloom. Walden leaned forward and poked the fire into a sudden blaze. In its light he caught the look upon the face of the young man—a look part teasing, part tenderness, part triumph.

"Maybe you seen it on the advertisements before we come into the park," pursued Sam, indolently. His eyes were also fixed upon Bud.

"The advertisements?" Bud spoke with a new intonation, almost sharp.

"Sure—the advertisements. He's wanted—Anthony Dent. He's a deserter."

"But that," began Bud, protestingly, "was——" He paused on the brink of his admitted knowledge.

"Oh! so you seen the advertisements? Yes, it was down in Wyoming, like you started to say. I ain't figured out yet just for why Uncle Sam is so blame anxious about this here Anthony Dent, private, when dozens as good deserters leave every day, an' your Uncle Samuel just takes chances on runnin' across them again."

"Lord knows," drawled Bud, flinging himself down on the ground and yawning indifferently.

"It's a Wyoming regiment that's come up to Livingston in place of Colonel Cartley's, gone to the Philippines."

"Oh!"

It was George Wright who interrupted the duologue. He was not interested.

"Where's the concertina?" he demanded. "Munro, will you give us a tune before we turn in?"

Munro acceded to the request. His supple wrists bent, and a wailing went up in the moonlight. He played the rude thing well. Now it was a rollicking measure; and one could fancy the feet of men beating time in rough dance halls; now it was a thin, homesick piping, and one saw a lonely prospector's hut on the edge of the mountain and the swift twilight falling. By and by, as the party broke up and made for the sleeping tents, it was a sentimental ditty that, for one person at least, conjured up the vision of a village yard, of a grape arbor and orderly rows of roses, of a sloping roof, and a boy clinging to its extreme corner.

"Why, George," said Felicia Wright, pausing with her hand on the flap of the women's tent, "what's that he's playing? Oh, I remember—I used to sing you that when you came out to Greenfield to see me. Don't you remember how it goes?"

I will meet you, I will greet you,
When the roses come again.

"Aren't you coming, Serena?"

"In a minute," said Serena.

"And that is the whole story, Serena."

The moon slid behind the crest of a mountain on the horizon; the ascending trails of steam in the nearer distances grew dim in the diminished light. Only the firelight still flashed. Close to its warmth sat Serena, huddled in wraps; beside her sat Bud Munro.

It seemed to her that she had traveled endlessly since he began to speak—had journeyed worlds, whole solar systems, from the kitchen roof and the sheltered childhood that had been the point of their departure. She had been in mining camps and in dance halls; she had seen shots exchanged over faro tables; she had been dragged on sledges across pitiless wastes of snow, and had seen the sun break hot across the gray sands of the desert. She had been in barracks, chafing at discipline, insubordinate, unruly.

"You see, Serena," he had said, "it's not that I'm such a prize deserter, but that I happened to take it out of a young whipper-snapper officer boy fresh from West Point. I gave him what-for with tongue and fist—and the men laughed to see it. It's a personal matter with him—not just our blessed country's determination not to lose her brave sojer boy."

"A deserter!" shivered Serena, unmoved by his lightness.

"Does it sound like that to you?" He spoke with regretful surprise.

"It sounds—it sounds like burglar, cutthroat, thief—any awful word. Oh, Tony! can't you see—"

"Not much," he confessed. "You see, this isn't our pretty Greenfield. Standards slide. Words don't frighten any longer. Honestly, Serena, I've done mighty little I'm ashamed of, though you'd shudder at some of them, I dare say. But they all seemed to come in the day's work. When I saw your crowd back there—I didn't know you, of course, but Felicia and George Wright I knew the minute I clapped eyes on them—it seemed to me it would be the biggest kind of a lark to be a guide in

your party. Then—I began to see Serena of the roof. Your eyes haven't changed, Serena."

"Don't," whispered Serena.

"And, by and by, it wasn't a lark at all. It was riding through the country I love—I always come back here for a big breath—with the—with my old playmate. And back there on the trail—you remember?"

"Please don't," whispered Serena again, her voice thick with pain.

"It wasn't a lark then. And to-night, after supper, when I saw you shaking off the memory of our ride and making yourself into Miss Serena Emerson, of New York and Greenfield—ah! I had to see if you'd remember the call. Walden! What is he to you?"

Within her cape, Serena's hands held each other closely.

"My own kind of man, Tony," she answered, steadily. "My own kind of man—not a boy, not a roisterer, not a—deserter!"

There was a little pause.

"Words do mean something, after all, when you say them," said Tony, slowly. "But—there's something stronger still. Haven't you felt it? The power of the rough and the wild—I haven't language, but you know what I mean."

Out of the tent where he had been talking with Sam, Walden came. He found himself unexpectedly calm, stunned into a sort of self-mastery. He approached the two at the fire.

"Munro," he began, "or Mr. Dent—whichever you prefer—"

"Munro to you, if you please," flashed Tony.

"Very well, Munro. Sam Monk suspects your identity. He's practically sure of it. He means to claim the reward back at Livingston."

"The devil he does!"

"Yes. He reasons that you are not a pal of his, and that the two or three hundred dollars will be useful to him. Besides, I think he feels the stirrings of duty and of citizenship in the matter."

"Never knew a man yet to do a yellow-dog trick without explaining it to himself as for the glory of God," interpolated Tony.

"Now," went on Walden, evenly and heavily, "I don't know what other crime besides desertion you committed——"

"I spanked a little lieutenant boy good and plenty," vouchsafed Tony, with an obvious joy in the recollection, "and I broke the guardhouse open and got off; these events transpiring," he went on, with monumental gravity, "after frequent and flagrant breaches of discipline."

"Well," said Walden, to whom Tony's irrepressible spirits were extremely distasteful, "since it was Miss Emerson's recognition of you that has put you in danger, I don't choose to have you caught."

Serena looked up, a quick breath of gratitude brushing her lips.

"I do not choose that she should ever be obliged, in pity and romantic remorse, to think of you again."

"It will not be so that she will think of me," declared Tony, springing to his feet, and speaking with a fiery arrogance that matched the other man's level contempt. Walden looked at him with heavy anger.

"In the country and the circles you left," he reminded the boy, "it is not customary to boast of a lady's remembrance. I have just concluded a purchase of Sam's second riding horse. Here is the bill of sale. The horse is yours, if you choose to take him, and ride away before we get back to the post. You know the country. Don't refuse offhand. If you decide affirmatively by to-morrow afternoon, we can arrange the matter. Afterwards—I have a little influence at the War Department—a pardon might be gotten. But no matter about that. Think it over. Serena, had you not better go in now? The air is very cold."

His voice was full of gentleness as he turned to her, and the hand he held to help her rise was kind and brotherly.

"Good-night, good-night!" half sobbed Serena.

The world seemed full of the torn glory of the sunset, reflected through breaks in the mountains. The sun dyed

the evening vapors until all the sky was glorious with color. As Serena watched, it seemed to her that all the light was concentrated upon the boyish figure riding across the high plateau, away, away from her.

Where the road curved behind a projecting shoulder of hillside he turned, rose in his stirrups, and waved a hand in farewell. She felt very desolate, alone in the wilderness. Her grief mounted, tried to escape her firm-pressed lips in a sob, her eyes in hot tears. Then she turned. Back beyond a hillock Walden was waiting for her; it had been good of him to give her this moment alone, good of him to plan the brief escape from the camp; but she must not keep him waiting long. She trailed back toward him, and he came to meet her.

"This is the moment that settles our lives," he told himself, steeling himself to bear whatever might come. "If she turns from me now, if she will not let me share her pain, then there is nothing for me to stand upon; but if, in her loneliness, she turns toward me, if it is I that she wants in her sadness—then I can win the rest!"

He paused, awaiting her, and she came on, composing her sad little face. She tried to twist her lips into a smile, and she raised her eyes to him. The look of yearning pity, which all his resolution to be impersonal could not subdue, smote her heart. She ran to him with a sudden tempest of sobs and tears.

"Oh, Vance! Vance!" she cried, in the kindly shelter of his arms. "Poor Tony! poor Tony!"

By and by, when her sobbing had dwindled away to an occasional flutter, she looked up at him again.

"How good you are, Vance!" she said, in sudden reverent wonder at the look upon his face. "How good you are!"

"Only happy, dearest," he said. "You ran to my arms when you were hurt—it is I that you love and need. I shall not be jealous again of whom you laugh with. Do you understand?"

For answer she only crept closer to him, and hid her face against his shoulder.

NEWTON'S LEGACY

By Josephine Dixon



SHAN'T need the *fräulein* or the nurse," Snicky was broadly hinting. "When I turn my trousers hind side 'fore the buttons slip into the button holes all right, and my blouse covers it so no one can see. I can wash my ears myself, if they should happen to get dirty. A nurse does get in one's way, isn't it?"

Newton was obdurate, though, and the *fräulein* and the nurse went with them, but they were kept in the background as largely as possible.

Gordon Richmond, Snicky's father, just before he died, had begged his old chum, Newton Harriman, to take charge of the little chap, to "teach him to ride straight and to keep his hands above the table." The two men had been devoted friends, and Newton had accepted the trust.

And so, six months after his father's death, Snicky, with the childish felicity of forgetting, was enjoying to his utmost capacity the delirious joys of Atlantic City in company with Newton, to whom he had transferred the affectionate title of "guv'nor."

They went together to the horse show, and in the children's class Snicky took a blue for the calico pony that had been a reward for letting the fellows' cigarette stumps alone. They went to the rolling-ball stands together, and there was a collection of Japanese "seconds" that would have shocked a boarding-house parlor. They were inseparable on the board walk, the joy of all the rolling-chair stands; for Snicky was much given to fatigue when there was the possibility of having a whole chair to himself, and a negro boy with whom

he might discuss things. They took in all the piers and tried the "down and out," and the "flip flap," and the "loop the loop," and all the things that women scream about and won't let you do.

They ate at the same table in the hotel without the hated presence of the nurse or the governess, and Snicky kept his napkin in his lap instead of a bib about his neck, and ordered his own food, while Newton thought of other things, so he shouldn't wonder what one did for cholera morbus. Sometimes they sailed in a boat together, and the boatman let him try his hand at the wheel.

And best of all were the baths they took together, for Snicky was learning to swim, kicking the water heaven high, and trying nobly to conceal the fact that he was scared. And at night he went to bed quite dutifully, and, though he couldn't keep awake, he could depend upon the guv'nor to take him to bed with him when he got in.

And in all this paradise there was only one cloud on his happiness. That was the presence of Miss Victoria Sherwood. He and Newton had been together when they met Victoria on the board walk, and, young as he was, Snicky resented the surprise with which she regarded them. Snicky was used to being taken for granted, and there was an added offense in the slight curiosity of her vivid glance as it traveled from Newton to his small person. He observed that she and Newton exchanged chill salutations, and that Newton forgot his story in the middle, and had gone back to the hotel and ordered a whisky-and-soda for himself and a bottle of lemon pop for Snicky, and paid

him a fabulous price to go to the matinee with the *fräulein*.

From the day of that first meeting Snicky observed a change in the *gouv'nor*. Their habits, too, changed; and, from passing the day in the varied pursuit of pleasure, they took to lingering on the board walk and sitting on the piers, which was restful but not exciting. Instead of automobiling and horseback rides over the island, their excursions were confined to walks that seemed to have for their sole object the view of a certain hotel. When Miss Sherwood happened to pass them walking or driving, it always seemed to make a difference in what they were doing, so that Newton altered his plans suddenly and consented to do something he had previously refused, or refused unconditionally to do the thing they had just settled upon doing.

When these conditions, oft repeated, became too obvious to be passed over in silence, Snicky tackled the *gouv'nor*, and received an entirely unsatisfactory explanation. It was too patent an evasion that a person whom one just "used to meet about" should be the cause of such saltatory proceedings.

Snicky had to confess to himself that she wasn't so very dreadful to look at. She was tall and browned with the sun, and she walked as though she were never tired. She generally wore white that was firm and glistening and unwrinkled, and her hair, which was quite black, was always very soft and smooth and unblown. When she moved about she made one think of the trim, swift-sailing yachts that could be seen from the board walk; and once when he had watched her swimming far out in a big surf he felt his resentment oozing out in spite of himself.

Then, finally, one day he met her face to face on the beach. He had come down in his bathing suit to wait for Newton, who was going to take him into the surf. While he was digging holes into which the water ran and formed little lakes, she came by. There were two or three young men with her, and they all sat down in a group near his lake.

When she saw him she made a little motion of surprise, and looked about to see who was with him. When she was convinced that there was only the faithful maid in the background, she took a sudden resolution and called him.

She seemed to understand boys, for she did not ask him his name and tell him it was a pretty one, or demand to know his age. Instead, she reached out to one of the young men for a box, and when she had received it she gave him a large handful of salt water taffy. Even then she respected his dignity, displaying no interest in knowing the views of his guardians respecting candy.

Then they engaged in conversation, and the young men, adopting the only refuge from neglect, took themselves away. It was not Snicky's characteristic to be reserved, and, though he had not intended to be very expansive to this young lady who had all unconsciously interfered with some of his pleasure, he was soon launched on an ocean of questions and confidences that were of a more or less personal nature. In the normal course of conversation they revealed their names, and Snicky, who was unbending under the favorable effect of the salt water taffy, betrayed his interest to the extent of asking her age. When she told him she was twenty-five, he took a rise out of her vanity by revealing the fact that he had a grandmother who was seventy-five. She bore the challenge pluckily, though, and he admired her for it. Then he demanded:

"Have you any boys, like me?"

"Nary a boy," she admitted. "I'm an old maid, Snicky—one of those old ladies who don't have boys."

"Ain't you never going to get married?" he asked, with commiseration.

She wagged her head sadly.

"I'm afraid not. Times are hard, and nice men are so scarce. The ones who like me aren't possible at all, you know; and the ones I like—well, the ones I like just naturally don't like me."

Snicky examined her critically, looking for some reason that she should be condemned to such a contrary fate.

"If they could see you swim," he ven-

tured, helpfully, "maybe they'd like you."

"They've seen me swim," she acknowledged. "I guess you've got to be something besides a swimmer to get married. Just knowing how to kick isn't such a desirable accomplishment for a wife, you know."

Snicky licked his taffy meditatively. He had gotten a little beyond his depth in the conversation.

"I'm going in swimming with the guv'nor," he announced, irrelevantly. "He takes me out to the lifeboat on his back. I get very deep down in the water, and I'm not afraid, and it's bully fun."

Victoria cast an anxious eye up and down the beach.

"I'm sure it is," she said, hastily. "But I think you had better run on and find him. I'm sure he's looking for you. And I think I'll go farther up, under the walk, where it's shady. Remember to keep your shoulders under the water, and don't get scary."

She got up rather hurriedly and retreated, and Snicky ran to find Newton, who was already coming down from the bath house ready for his plunge. She watched them as they met, and her eyes followed them as the child rode in state on Newton's shoulders to the water's edge.

They were a beautiful pair, she thought—beautiful as a marble group from an old gallery. The childish figure, looking so slight for the fine, large head with its mass of soft, yellow curls, rested lightly on the broad, strong shoulders. All the muscular promise of the child, it seemed to her, was already fulfilled in the man—the vivid robustness, the striking physical activity, the grace of abundant vitality. With the surf breaking about them, they might have been models for youth and maturity as the Greeks sketched them.

She lay in the warm sand and watched them lazily. Six years before—what a child she had been!—she had had a very silly love affair. She had loved him. Oh, yes, she had loved him, if a girl of nineteen could really know anything about love. Then they had quarreled—that is,

they had quarreled for the last time. From their childhood, when they had played in each other's yards and clawed and scratched for the privilege of drowning the kittens, they had divided their time between quarrels and pacifications.

But in that last grievance she had given him no time for explanation. She had been told that he danced three times with that Brooks affair, who was a widow. That was surely a crime that admitted of no extenuation. There is something particularly venomous, as every woman knows, in the jealousy of a widow. And Aunt Matilda, who disapproved marriage in general and this one in particular, had added fuel to the fire of her indignation. They had met and—something as she had seen it done at the *matinée*—she had dismissed him.

She threw the sand over her feet meditatively, and continued her reminiscences.

During six years in Europe she had danced and flirted in every language. She had had chances to marry. As she looked back over them she marveled that she had been able to escape marrying, for the foreigner is skillful in the chase when an American girl with money is the quarry. But here she was home again, unmarried; and Aunt Matilda, now from her invalid couch, was whimpering that she was an old maid.

It was an odd coincidence that she should have met Him here. At first she had decided to pack up and leave; but the tents of Aunt Matilda were folded with difficulty, and, after all, the town and the ocean were surely large enough for two people who had no desire to meet each other.

She shaded her eyes with her hand, and made out the two figures splashing in the spray. She got up and brushed the sand from her arms. She sighed in one breath, and laughed at the sigh with the next; then she walked to the water's edge. Where the water ran cold over her feet she paused to watch a crowd that was streaming to a center of excitement. She plunged into the deep water herself and swam slowly toward the place.

The guards far out in the boat had

thrown off their scarlet coats, and were swiftly rowing in toward the shore. The guards from the shore were swimming out to meet them. A stout woman with her arms tightly locked about the throat of a small man was floundering excitedly above and below water. With the special genius of the drowning, she was sinking everyone who came near to render assistance. A hundred persons, standing and swimming at safe distances, were shrieking advice to the unexcited guards, who were hourly called upon for such rescues. When the little man, half dead, and the stout woman, still clambering over him, were skillfully drawn into the boat, the crowd dispersed and Victoria swam slowly away.

The surf was heavy, but farther out, where the water was deep, the waves ran in high, soft billows; and, plunging through the breakers with a few long strokes, she came into the smooth rollers. There were only a few swimming out so far, and with a little sigh of content she turned over, folded her hands under her head, and drifted in the hammock of the tide. The sun was very bright and she closed her eyes. There was no sound out there—nothing but the soft purring of the water and the faint echoes of the cries of the bathers.

Suddenly, though, she was conscious of a struggle in the water near her, and the sharp note of a child's voice raised in fear. The lifted spray blew in tiny drops across her face. She threw out an arm and turned toward the sound. There was no one near, but within two strokes there was a swirling, frothy area that steadied a second, then swung and rose on the crest of a wave.

A week, it seemed to her, passed before the roller was gone and the water sank into a valley.

Then two bodies slowly rose to the surface. The man's face was gray and twisted with pain, and the child clung to him in frenzied fear. She could see the little drops of blood where the boy's fingers sunk into the man's shoulders and neck. The child's curls, dark and heavy, hung like a mask over his little face. His knees were drawn up to his arms, and in his terror he was struggling

to get to his feet, and pressing deeper and deeper the body under him. As well as she could see, half of the man's body was inert. One arm hung limp and motionless at his side. He was trying desperately to make a stroke, talking to the child in broken gasps.

"Down—in—the—water—dearest—low—down. No—fear! A—long—breath—so! That's—better—we'll—"

It took but one glance to recognize them, and the flash of a second's time to understand.

Snicky had said they were going out to the life guard's boat. Doubtless they were well out when the boat was called off. He had not been able to rest the child, and had become exhausted or was taken with cramp. In that situation they must sink finally in the next breaker. He had reached the extreme of endurance. The fight he made was beautiful. She had time to notice that, even as she struck out toward him. Each time he threw his head out of the water for the short gasp of air he called a word of encouragement to the boy, but he was so near exhaustion that the voice was scarcely more than a faint cry when she reached them. Six years were as though they had not been when she spoke to him.

"Steady, Newt!" she called. "A second, and I'll take the child."

She grasped the boy by the collar of his bathing suit and dragged him toward her. Then, holding him deep in the water, she pushed back a space.

"You must turn on your back," she called.

For a second he seemed not to hear, then he turned slowly.

They rose together to the summit of another big wave.

She watched him anxiously, but his breath was coming better and he was swimming—not consciously, but by instinct.

"Shall you need any help?" she called to him again.

He looked toward her and cried faintly:

"Victoria!"

She was keeping Snicky's head well up, but he was taking in water like a

leaky ship. He had seen her face, though, and he remembered, even in his fright, that she could swim, so he did not struggle.

"You're sure you can get in?" she cried again to Newton.

He nodded his head weakly.

"Sure; but—the—boy——"

"The boy's all right. Steady for this breaker!"

When they came out of the foam she was well ahead, but she glanced back and saw that he was coming slowly in. Then she pushed on rapidly, for she knew his strength and endurance, and the boy was swinging heavily on her arm. In shallow water she gained her feet, and brought Snicky sharply up. Then she turned him over and slapped him on the back. He recognized a friendly if muscular arm, and as he rendered up vast quantities of salt water he smiled a little, blue, twisted smile of acknowledgment. At the beach she delivered him into the hands of his nurse.

"Rub him down with alcohol," she said, "and get him warm." And to Snicky: "You're all right, boy; but don't try such a long swim next time."

Then she glanced back toward the water once more, and, with a little expression of satisfaction, ran fleetly in toward the bath house.

In the afternoon Newton, still a little pale from the effect of that grinding, crucifying cramp that had deadened one-half of his body in the morning, stopped at Victoria's hotel and sent up his card.

He waited anxiously, even nervously, in the exchange for the answer the much be-buttoned boy would bring him. It was a trying experience—this waiting for some one to whom you owed your life and something much dearer. He abundantly acknowledged all that he owed her; but somewhere in the background he questioned if, after all, death didn't have advantages over the situation in which he now found himself.

He fidgeted in the cushioned chair and watched the people wandering aimlessly about—florid women trailing over-trimmed silks and perspiring under their heavy enameling of powder and

rouge; apoplectic men who, in defenseless *ennui*, oscillated between the dining room and the stairway that led to the café below; little children dressed to suffocation, petulant from the heat, bored by the attentions of strangers and savage from restraint; indifferent bell boys, heaped on retired benches, swapping the latest scandals about the guests.

The room was huge and well aired, theatrically decorated to represent the little Trianon, with small drawing rooms opening on different sides, in every period and after every decorator, that each pampered patron might find some place that suited his fancied fancy. In the great music room beyond a weary orchestra was wailing "Hiawatha."

He was oppressed and irritated. He glared moodily at everyone who came within the range of his vision, and in his heart he hated them all—one for her eyes, another for her elbows, and one particularly offensive man for the trousers he wore.

He pictured himself in the attitude he should assume when Victoria received him. She would receive him, he knew, if only for the curiosity of knowing how he should carry off such a difficult affair. What was he to say to her? A thousand times in the last six years he had dreamed of meeting her, of touching her hand—for it is the necessity of love that there shall be the expectation of another meeting, no matter how impossible; but never, never had he fancied he should come as the absurd knight who had been showing off and gotten a pain somewhere.

The more he pondered about it, the greater the temptation became to break for the door and liberty, gather up Snicky and leave for home on the next train. Each time the elevator door opened his breath hooked up high in his throat and flight was in his feet; but, in spite of the interruptions, his memory ran back to that time—that last day of his boyhood, it seemed—when Victoria, in her riding habit—the jacket just a shade too tight for her slender figure—her hair blown about by the fast ride, her cheeks crimson with indignation, was declaring it all a mistake.

The bell boy at his elbow, announcing that Miss Sherwood would receive him in her private reception room, interrupted his reverie.

Victoria herself opened the door for him. There was no embarrassment in her manner as she held out her hand to him. He felt for the thousandth time the wonder that women should always be so capable in awkward situations.

"It's awfully good of you to come around," she said, motioning him to a chair by the open window. There was nothing in her manner to indicate that they were more or less than friendly acquaintances. He felt the contradictory wish that she had been less assured, less oblivious of that past which they had shared.

She wore a white linen gown with insertions of open lace that gave glimpses of her strong white throat and sunburned arms. The straight-lined, half boyish figure he remembered had expanded now into luscious curves of shoulders and waist. Her hair was drawn up high on her head, and lay in soft masses of unseparated coil and pompadour. He contrasted his own perspiring condition with her cool, glistening freshness, and with a scarcely articulate word of thanks slipped into the chair.

"And the boy?" she asked. "I suppose he's none the worse for his wetting?" She swept a magazine out of a chair and sat down opposite him, where the ocean breeze from the window stirred the soft lace at her throat. She was deliciously feminine, he thought, in spite of that impression one got of muscles strong as steel springs, and that air of candid *camaraderie*.

Without any loss of time, he plunged madly into the speech of gratitude he had half rehearsed and wholly dreaded. He was conscious that it was not eloquent, that where it was not melodramatic it was inept; but, having taken the bit in his teeth, he was not to be stopped until he had exhausted his vocabulary. When he had finished she leaned back in her chair and laughed.

"It would do for a play, the way you put it," she said. "You make me feel

like a Florence Nightingale or a Red Cross something or other. I suppose you have forgotten the time you fished me out of the dam with the boat hook?"

"I haven't forgotten," he said—"neither that, nor the time you—" It was to be only another episode of their childish pranks, but their eyes flickered, and the very slightest pause fell. The color in her cheeks deepened a trifle, and Newton, watching for some such sign, knew that her unembarrassed ease was less assailable than it appeared. She made the very slightest motion, as if to dismiss the recollections.

"And his mother?" she said, a little hastily. "I suppose there'll be no more swimming for Snicky, eh?"

She tried to say it without concern, punctuating it with a little laugh; but there was just a hint of scrutiny in the glance she passed him.

"His mother," he said. "Oh, didn't you know his mother is dead? Poor chap! he's rather bad off in that way."

"Really," she said. "I beg your pardon. I've been away such a time, you know. I thought—I thought—that is, you must feel the responsibility."

"I do," he said, simply. "If anything had happened to him this morning—if you hadn't come along and yanked him out, I don't well see, you know, what I should have done. You see, when Richmond passed out he felt so about the boy, and I'm so deucedly fond of him."

He was conscious that she was regarding him in a measuring, narrow-lidded way, but he pushed on.

"I'm trying to be father and mother and the whole shooting match to him. It looked easy, but I'm making rather a mess of it, as you know by this morning. If he lives to be grown I'm thinking it'll be his luck, not my management. But if he fetches up wrong I'm quite sure the ha'nts 'll get me. Rich would rise out of his grave for the boy."

"You mean Gordie Richmond?" she said. "I used to know him. He must have changed a bit before he took to children, eh?"

"You never know what these small kids can do," he replied; "but in Rich's case things were bad—affecting, you

know. There never was a man so much in love with his wife; and when Snicky came she died——"

He paused to wonder at the expression of Victoria's face. Her cheeks were touched with a faint flush that went suddenly crimson from her throat to the margin of her dark eyelashes. She opened her lips to speak, and closed them sharply again.

He felt back in a dizzy way over the conversation, trying to remember if he had put the thing indelicately. Her gay laugh, though, was more reassuring than she could have fancied.

"It was only one of those droll mistakes," she said, with no fall in the tide of her color. "I supposed—that is, I didn't know about Gordie's interest in the boy. I thought—that is, I supposed that Snicky was your child—your own, you know. I thought I could even see a resemblance. With such an imagination, I should be writing novels, don't you think, instead of languishing in obscurity?"

"You do me honor," Newton assented. "It's the only grudge I bear Snicky—that he's not my own. But for marrying—well——"

Then suddenly that past rose up again, and he leaned urgently toward her.

"I haven't thought of marriage for six years. Not since you chucked me over. Did you think I could get over that so soon?"

"I'm so little given to thought," she answered, evasively, retiring her hands a little nervously from the arm of the chair to her lap. "Thinking makes my head ache, and then six years doesn't make it hopeless. You still have your hair and your teeth."

He frowned. "I made a mistake," he said. "I haven't thought of anything else for six years. I'm just as keen about it as the day you sent me about my busi-

ness. I'm a stolid creature, and when I get an idea it's hard for me to let go. Seeing you like this to-day is too much for me. It isn't enough for you to have pulled in to-day, but I'm just mucker enough to bat out and have you turn me down as you did that other time."

"I don't think that's so—so muckerish," she replied.

"That depends on the point of view," he said, grimly. "I'd better trot home."

"So soon?" she asked, holding out her hand. He rose briskly.

"Thank you," he said, "for a good half hour, and for Snicky. I shall probably not see you again, but I'll always be just as grateful. You did us a good turn."

Her hand lay in his a trifle lingeringly.

"It's nothing," she said, slowly, "unless it makes up for—for that other time—that time I didn't play quite fair—that time six years ago."

"Makes up?" he said, wonderingly—"makes up? Well, you see that stands out by itself—a sort of knock-down-and-drag-out affair. I don't mean to minimize what you've done to-day; but, to whine quite frankly, it doesn't patch that up. There's only one thing could 'heal me wounds,' as they say out on the pier."

"I'd do almost anything," she said, tremulously.

He dropped her hand, and looked at her dizzily.

"Victoria," he said, uncertainly, "you can't—you couldn't—you wouldn't——"

She laughed a little chokingly.

"You sound as if you were conjugating, Newt, dear boy. It's been six long years, and I'm sorry, and I can, I could, I would, if—if——"

"But I mean—I mean marry—Victoria, would you——"

"Well, I thought," she said, brokenly, "I thought I might help you take—care—of—Snicky!"



WHY SHE DISLIKED HIM

By W. D. Nesbit

"WHAT makes the stars so bright?" she sighed,
And archly turned her head
Her softly brilliant eyes to hide.
The sober fellow said:
"The stars themselves are dull and cold,
But somewhere, far away,
There is a sun, whose rays, we're told
Makes them as bright as day.
It is reflected light they hold—
They don't possess a ray."

And then she shrugged her shoulders fair
And went in, with a chilling air.

"What makes the sky so blue?" she asked
Of him another day.
His batteries were then unmasked,
His science brought to play.
"It is not blue," he gravely said.
"The air is colorless,
And of the void that overhead
Attracts us, we but guess.
The blueness is, as I have read,
Illimitableness."

And then, with something like a yawn,
She left him standing on the lawn.

Another day—another man:
"The sky," he vowed, "is blue,
Because it's part of nature's plan
To mock the eyes of you.
Why, every star that shines at night—
A glory in the skies—
Is but a borrower of light
And beauty from your eyes,
But cannot be so fair a sight
No matter how it tries!"

She said, as soon as she was kissed:
"I just despise a scientist!"

W. D. NESBIT.

PARISIAN THEATERS AND PLAYS

By Alan Dale

Mr. Dale, who is writing a series of articles from Paris and London for this magazine, gives a remarkable picture in the present article of the extraordinary condition of the Paris theatres. He also describes entertainingly several of the more successful plays of the Paris stage.



PARIS.
O undertake a "round" of theater-going in Paris, after the easy, luxurious, and comparatively inexpensive circuit of the New York playhouses, calls for stoicism, endurance, serenity of mind, a felicitous temperament, and a certain amount of physical courage. Perhaps distance lends enchantment to the view; perhaps it "robes the mountain in its azure hue." Perhaps—well, perhaps a good many other things. The American critic, however, who suddenly finds himself confronted with the problem of theatrical entertainment in Paris, may be pardoned for regarding it as an ordeal, the severity of which cannot be overestimated.

It may be that a particularly arduous "season" in New York had wearied me. At any rate, I am willing to make all possible excuses. During the last week, however, when I have "circulated" through the most popular Parisian playhouses, I must confess that theater-going in the French metropolis has been full of almost unspeakable discomfort, and I have suffered mentally and physically in the mere effort to "review."

The theaters of Paris are to-day what they were in the eighties—neither better nor worse. They have stood still. Modern improvement has passed them by. They are enslaved by the demon of conservatism. In a word, they are behind the times.

Of course, I am talking of the houses themselves—of the shells in which dramatic art is cooked. We all know (and I have re-discovered it this year) that even banal plays are interesting in Paris, because they are so magnificently played, from the smallest to the most important part; we are all aware that histrionism flourishes in the French temperament. But it is a hardship—it is, in fact, sheer pain—for the Americans, accustomed to comfort, ease, politeness (yea, politeness), to battle with the French theaters.

It is just as well to exploit a few fallacies. The easiest fallacy is that the Frenchman is essentially polite. Go to the French theaters, and you will laugh at the mere idea. Rampant officialism; the insolence of the *guichet*; the overbearing impudence of the horrible old women, called *ouvreuses*, who marshal you to your seats, and tear your hat from your head, and your cane from your hand; the silent contempt with which you are greeted if you manifest a desire for information—all these points give the lie to the absurd idea that the French nation is particularly addicted to politeness and gallant usage.

Another fallacy—that the Frenchwoman is the best-dressed woman in the world. I unhesitatingly affirm that an audience at the Grand Opera House in New York is more picturesque, more richly attired, and more *convenable* than a select gathering at even the Comédie Française. Evening dress is rarely worn;

the highly advertised Parisiennes slouch into the playhouse in shirt-waists and odd skirts, supplemented by hats that they decline to remove. Occasionally you see a handsome outfit, and, ten to one, if you take the trouble, you will discover that its owner is either American or English. Perhaps in the boxes you will see a group that may resemble the traditional ideas of how Frenchwomen should look. But the general appearance of a Parisian audience is cheap, slovenly and ugly.

When I reflect upon the elegance of the New York theaters—the brilliant lighting, the warm and mellow carpets, the opulent luxury, the effort to give people something better than they get at home—the poverty of the thing in Paris is appalling, and costly! In most of the Paris theaters you pay two dollars for an orchestra seat, and forty cents extra if you book in advance. That is not all. You think you have done nobly when you have doled out twelve francs for a seat behind a pillar in a big theater near the boulevards. But woe unto you, oh, unsophisticated New Yorker, if you have ventured forth without a pocket full of small change!

It seems to me that in Paris one is always buying programs. They are sold outside the theaters, and inside the theaters. Some of them are correct; most of them are incorrect. It is a sort of a gamble. You go on buying programs until you get the right one. As they are full of advertisements, you wonder why you can't get one for nothing. The Frenchman, however, is not accustomed to the luxury of knowing the names of the author of the play he sees and of the people in the cast.

At the Théâtre Antoine, the other night, nobody in my vicinity owned a program. I had bought two—one quite wrong, and the other apparently right; so I was able to diffuse agreeable information. I could quite see why my neighbors were programless. It is a fearful nuisance to secure this little necessity of theater-going.

At one of the theaters I saw a woman selling programs, marked at five cents each. I hailed her, and secured one. In

return I handed her the labeled twenty-five centimes. She looked at me as though I were a criminal. I thought she was going to hit me. For a moment she was speechless with indignation. Then she turned to me and said, "Where do I come in? I bought these programs for five cents each. How do you expect me to live if I make no profit on them? *Voyons, monsieur, mes petits bénéfices.*"

I gave her a couple of coppers, and she nearly kissed me. A look of exquisite gratitude appeared, and she murmured affectionate thanks. If I had given her half a franc I believe that she would have fallen at my feet. But one does not go to the theater to dispense charity. The French managers permit these beggars and licensed tramps to infest the playhouses, and dog one's footsteps. It seems to me that if these poor creatures received a decent salary (which they do not) a great step in advance would be made. Just imagine at the Empire Theater, in New York, a set of these harpies cringing before you and groveling for pennies for programs!

More pennies are distributed for the care of your hat. The old girls loathe you if you insist upon caring for it yourself. Some of them, moreover, demand money just the same. You give it cheerfully, rather than confide your hat to the dirty racks on which they are placed. Not for a gold clock would I wear my hat again after it had been deposited on the filthy walls of these unclean playhouses.

You pay again to get to your seat. The auditorium of the French theaters is shut off by doors that open only from the inside. You might as well try to find a needle in a bundle of hay as to attempt to get to your seat unaided. In the orchestra, the *ouvreuses* are inclined to be polite. In the cheaper parts of the house (which I was idiotic enough on one or two occasions to sample) they look upon you as an intruder unless you tip them largely.

I mention these points because they were rife twenty years ago. Why should they exist to-day? These are the little pin-pricks that count. They are not enough to constitute agony, but they

make for an irresistible discomfort. Of course, French people are used to it, and one can grow accustomed to anything. To the stranger within the gates the petty worries inseparable from French theater-going are little less than disgusting.

Paris, with its reputation for good taste and artistic sentiment, has much to learn from New York—the land of Goths! I take pleasure in exploding the mere myth that Paris is the center of culture and elegance—at any rate, as far as its theaters are concerned. At the Théâtre Français—the most widely known playhouse in the world—I was astonished at the niggardly appointments. There was an old curtain that looked as though the rats and mice had been lunching on it for years. It suggested antiquity and the need of a bath. At the other houses the barbarous advertisement curtain is still used. You go to see a dainty comedy, and, when the curtain falls, your mind is distracted by hideous printed legends of corsets, mineral waters, hats and underwear. No matter what kind of play you see, nor at what theater, the same advertisement curtain greets the eye.

This inartistic interruption; this sordid recall to the ugliness of the hour; this shock to one's sense of the fitness of things—must be inevitable. In America, if such episodes occurred, I can imagine the comments! The French people call England a "nation of shopkeepers." I ask what can there be more squalid, more trivial, more tuppenny-ha'penny, more calamitously and pitifully "out of the picture" than these advertisement curtains displayed between every act of any sort of play?

The French theaters are void of ventilation. The inclosure of the auditorium shuts off all air. Even in May, they are swelteringly hot. Upstairs with the gods it is indescribable. I had one experience; next morning I was up betimes at a Turkish bath. I felt that I could not mingle again with the world without a *séance* at the Hammam after that terrific evening upstairs, in that impossibly dirty theater, in the simmering discomfort of a French crowd.

On another occasion, determined to study the French theaters from the best view-point, I went to the *loges de la deuxième*, resolved to brave it out. I clambered up scores of wooden stairs—unwashed, decaying, cracky, terrifying stairs. I was pushed into a seat that would have been endurable if I had owned no knees or elbows. Unfortunately, I had two of each, and it was impossible to place them. However, I sat down with a grim fortitude. Soon, however, the heat arose in gusts. In a few minutes an irritation that suggested the mosquito (but was *not* the mosquito) made me think of escape. As the curtain rose, and I realized that there was a dense crowd behind me, through which I could scarcely hope to emerge, a positive fear took possession of me. The height was horrible; I thought of the wooden stairs; I fancied I scented smoke; I thought of Chicago, and how infinitely worse a disaster here would be. Impossible to watch the play. So I beat a retreat as quickly as I could, went downstairs, and exchanged my seat for the orchestra and saw the play with less difficulty. This was at the Gymnase Theater, and the play was "Le Retour de Jerusalem."

The very best theaters in Paris—barring, perhaps, the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt—are, from the point of view of decoration and elegance, about on a par with the Third Avenue Theater in New York. Perhaps I am libeling the Third Avenue, where I have spent several comfortable afternoons. In a box at the Third Avenue one is infinitely more at ease than in a similar position at the Gymnase. Yet the prices in Paris are exorbitant, and, except at the Théâtre Antoine, where you can obtain a fair orchestra seat for a dollar, theater-going here is infinitely more expensive than it is in New York.

And yet we protest. Some of us think two dollars in New York too expensive. One or two New York managers have reduced their prices to cope with our protestations. Come to Paris, ye kickers, and realize how well off you are. You pay two dollars, and—it ends there. At any rate, if you pay more

you know how much you have to pay. In Paris you give out two dollars and a half or three dollars, and then you dip a hand into a jingly pocket and distribute alms right and left to managerial vampires.

My only wonder is that they don't take your clothes and bric-a-brac from you as you enter the Paris theater. I'm surprised that there isn't a *guichet* where you hand in your watch and scarf pin and rings—to say nothing of your best \$4.98 suit of clothes—and get in exchange a cool sheet, in which you can view the play and go home. Even that I would prefer—if I knew I had to do it—to the wearying conflict with unexpected hold ups and the fatiguing distribution of *petite monnaie*.

Please don't think that I have been guilty of exaggeration, nor that these views are based upon a couple of mere visits to the playhouses. Since I have been in Paris I have made the round of theaters, music halls and *cafés chantants*. Everywhere I have found the same system, or lack of system—the identical nuisances, discomforts and indubitable signs of “stand still.” The French theaters are behind the times; there is no doubt at all about that. In New York, where theater-going has been reduced to a science, the French playhouse would be a curiosity.

The Frenchman, however, who has grown up to this fossilized condition of things, knows of no other. He is essentially “insular.” Not only is he unacquainted with the vast improvements in theaters outside of his own land, but he has no desire for information. Paris, for the Parisian, is the beginning and the end of the world. Talk with a French manager, and tell him how nicely we manage these little affairs outside of Paris, and he will shrug his shoulders and murmur an irritated “*Ah, bien!*” You resolve to say your little say, and—he looks out of the window and hums an air. To him you are merely an *étranger*, and the French manager wonders why you bother about living.

Personally, I don't think that Paris theaters will ever improve. As I said before, they are in precisely the same

condition to-day as they were twenty years ago. In some of them there is the same curtain and the same frayed-out carpets. I believe that the *ouvreuses* I knew in the days when I was a lad are still unchanged—a generation or so older and more grasping, but still plying their nefarious traffic in the same way. Hateful old women!

However, in spite of all these sufferings—purely personal, but, I trust, not lacking in interest—I managed to reach the kernel of the French dramatic season, which has been an unusually good one, with many successes. Although I missed Sarah Bernhardt in “*La Sorcière*,” and found that she had substituted “*Varennnes*,” I was not discouraged. Yet I did not visit “*Varennnes*.” Somehow or other, I had no very teeming curiosity to see the immortal Sarah, at the skittish age of five-and-sixty, playing *Marie Antoinette*, who, if I mistake not, ended her earthly career in her thirties.

Poor Marie Antoinette! I wonder if, in her present non-terrene existence, she is interested in the dramatic old ladies who dally with her poor little history. I remember seeing Modjeska, not very long ago, at the Fifth Avenue Theater, New York, doing her best, in her own mature way, to vitalize this character. Apparently an actress must be at least fifty before she feels that she is able to cope with Marie Antoinette at thirty! It is one of the *bizareries* of the stage. To simulate youth, one must no longer possess it!

Looking at the Paris season, from an American point of view (which would be quite droll here), it is impossible to resist the conclusion that if Moses had omitted the seventh commandment from the rules and regulations that have descended to the world, there would have been no French drama. The fracture of this commandment is the backbone of nine-tenths of the French plays. It is not insisted upon; it is almost taken for granted.

Whereas we, in our little unsophisticated way, prefer a heroine about to enter into the labyrinthine complexities of the thing we call love, in Paris the

central feminine figure is generally married, and extremely devoted to—some other fellow. The French plays that reach New York have shown you that. Those that do not reach New York, and flourish here, simply reek with a veritable infusion of a crushed and quintessential seventh commandment. The young girl, in Paris, is looked upon as a white-muslin idiot. Undoubtedly she is one, for she is not allowed to say "Bo!" to a goose. Femininity, to be interesting here, must be married, and consequently free.

Even the new play at the Comédie Française—the theater where French "families" go, though I should prefer to keep mine at home—has this sort of a heroine in its great success, by Marcel Prévost, called "*La Plus Faible*." It is not unlikely that this play will be done into English (M. Prévost himself told me so), but how the adapter will ever get around the fact that the guileless, beauteous and suffering heroine, *Germaine de Maucombe*, who is beloved of the hero, had run away from her legitimate husband, and was consequently not as nice as she might be, goodness only knows.

This play, which is clever in spite of its essentially French flavor, pictures *Germaine* as a lovely, suffering creature. She is comfortably ensconced in *Jacques'* house. He is a "literary man," and he adores her. He is so French that such a little detail as a mere husband does not worry him in the least. "What a *bourgeois* you are!" he says to the "friend of the family" (inseparable from French drama) who would like to see this union regularized. "*Germaine* is my wife, and I am her husband. It is useless to take the French republic to witness to a fact that concerns us two only."

This rather antique idea, that Americans use only when they want to be particularly "naughty," and are desirous of "creating talk," is exploited very thoroughly in "*La Plus Faible*." In justice to M. Prévost, it must be said that his play ends with marriage, and that his apparent object was to prove that, while a legitimate union was not

essential to the man, it was necessary for the happiness of the woman, who was "*la plus faible*."

"Suppose we had a 'regularized household' like the others," he continues; "what should we gain? People would come to see us. We should go to see people. That is all. What should we gain? What would *Germaine* gain?"

I was rather surprised to find at the Comédie Française cheap and maudlin rubbish of this sort—old as the hills, and played out to the point of exhaustion. *Germaine*, herself, was not at all anxious for marriage. As she had a husband living, this was perhaps just as well. Nor did she wish for divorce. Her "religious principles" were opposed to divorce. They did not seem to be proof against an "irregular household." To us that is odd; to the Parisians it is not at all odd. *Germaine* says her prayers, kneels to the Virgin, and talks to her "saintly protectress" of *Jacques*, of his health, of his books, of his plans, and of their mutual love. Pretty, eh?

I mention these details just to give you an idea of the way the French play-going public look upon matters that simply shock the English-speaking people. Nobody turns a hair in Paris at this horrid mixture of religion and unsanctified love. It is absolutely ordinary—just as the charming, ingenuous love of two fledglings is ordinary with us. We never get enough of this charming, ingenuous love, which fills our drama. Paris never gets enough of its illicit, "left-handed" attachments, which fill its drama. There is no use inveighing against it. It is indigenous. Nothing will change it.

The plot of "*La Plus Faible*" shows the efforts of *Jacques'* family to break up his "home" with *Germaine*. He is wounded in a duel, and taken to his mother's house. There his mind is poisoned against the woman he loves, and he is plied with the idea that she is unfaithful. *Jacques'* people are very respectable, and very unsympathetic. The playwright spares no pains to depict respectability in non-alluring colors. *Jacques'* sister, who is mainly responsible for *Germaine's* desertion, is por-

trayed as somebody quite too detestable for serene contemplation. Beside her, the "heroine" is indeed a "heroine."

In the end (somewhat banal for the "first theater in Paris") *Germaine's* husband is kindly removed to another sphere. *Jacques* has become convinced of her fidelity. An American or an Englishman would never have doubted it, but a Frenchman simply revels in suspicions of this sort. They are the salt of his life. *Germaine* consents to marry him—not because she cares for the world, not because she demands any legal rights, but just because he asks her. "If you ever tire of me, you can leave me," she says, pathetically. "I shall never want you under those circumstances."

I thought that charming, and so unsophisticated. The indications certainly were that he would tire of her, and, being a Frenchman, that he would not ask permission. We look at these little Parisian romances satirically. We see through them. The ordinary Parisian regards affairs of this sort as the purest sort of romance. He even sheds a tear at such devotion. It is curious. The acting at the Comédie Française is always interesting. The new leading lady, Marie Leconte, is not what we call "strong"; but strength, and rant, are forbidden at this house. The actors play quietly, and rise to few situations. It was M. de Feraudy, the "friend of the family," who appealed to me most strongly; Henry Mayer, who played *Jacques*, seemed rather tame and—er—French.

"Le Retour de Jerusalem," at the Gymnase, is another big Parisian success, with a similar moral—or immoral—tone. Perhaps its extreme vogue was due to the fact that M. Maurice Donnay, the author, made its heroine a Jewess, and by this means was able to introduce various religious questions into his play. The piece has been much discussed by an anti-Semitic public, that applauded the Christian hero and remained ominously silent at the diatribes of the Hebraic heroine.

The fact that the Christian hero cruelly deserted his wife and two children to rush off on an unsavory "honeymoon" to

Jerusalem with *Judith* was evidently not counted against him. He uttered lovely sentiments on the subject of patriotism; he gave vent to scathing denunciations of the Jewish friends who flocked to see *Judith*—and he was a hit with the public. As the lady herself was also married, and separated from the gentleman who gave her his name, she was, morally speaking, not very much better than the hero. But she was a Jewess, and Paris was prepared to accept her as a villainess—and, as a matter of fact, did so accept her.

Maurice Donnay, who takes himself amusingly seriously, and seems to labor under the delusion that he is epoch making, has taken the trouble to assert that he is neither for nor against the Hebrew—that he is, in fact, impartial. Who but the Parisian cares a hang? If the anti-Semitic population can be rapturously interested in a Christian "hero" who is about as disgusting a creature as a normally constituted person could imagine, it seems to me that M. Donnay's partiality or impartiality is of little account. It is, however, certain that he has tried to be inflammatory, and, though he made the man morally more contemptible than the woman, he plied him with "speeches" that made him popular with the public.

Jewish types galore are introduced into this play. There is even a Zionist of whom *Judith* is hopelessly enamored. But this charming lady had a most loving heart, and was prepared to fall in love with any creed. She had foresworn her religion before the play began, in order to marry a count; but no sooner has she left her titled husband, and lured *Jacques* from his family, than she feels a yearning for Jerusalem, and trots him off to that spot. She waxes exceedingly enthusiastic over the tomb of Solomon, where she wept bitter tears. This was meant to be graceful. I thought the picture of this siren, on a pleasure trip to Jerusalem with a gentleman who had left a lovely wife and children in Paris, dissolving into tears at Solomon's tomb, quite too screamingly French. Who but a Frenchman could imagine such glittering bathos?

Judith wearies of her lover very quickly, and he retaliates. He is a gray-headed sinner, old enough to know better—if one ever reaches that age in Paris. As far as I could see, the only object of "Le Retour de Jerusalem"—the sole excuse for all this nastiness and nausea—was the final scene of recrimination between the two, into which religion was dragged in all its force. Each has a protégé, anxious for a government position. *Judith's* is, of course, a Hebrew; her lover's is a non-Hebrew. It is the protégé of *Judith* who gets the position, and is meant to typify the energy, the wire pulling and the irresistible power of the Jews.

"Since that day we spent in Jerusalem," she says, "and I saw a pitiful troupe of co-religionists praying before the ruins of the temple—hunted by persecution from the country in which they were born—I swore that, with all my energy and all my force, I would serve my race. I swore that they should be the strongest, and that they should never again see the abominable times of the ghetto. Do not misjudge me. Do not pin me down to personalities. Defend yourself. You have the advantage of numbers. Try and concentrate yourself, and imitate us. I glorify my sentiment, and—I no longer love you."

This is the sort of thing that made "Le Retour de Jerusalem" successful, and ran it to a two-hundredth performance, which is unusual in Paris. The play appealed to the anti-Dreyfusard, and M. Donnay was clever enough to know how to touch the public. It was not the mixed morality of the play that created interest. A pair of lovers, married elsewhere, is no longer able to awaken much interest in Paris at a theater of the caliber of the Gymnase. But, spiced up with religion, the situation was changed.

The play might have caused a riot if it had not been somewhat toned down at rehearsal.

To me it seems pitiful that a playwright, eminent as Maurice Donnay is considered, should descend to pettiness of this sort. It is deplorable to consider the matter too analytically—to reflect

that paprika made from religious belief is necessary to make a play "go" in the French metropolis. We have not yet reached this decadent situation. However, the French playwright can no longer create a "sensation" by his morality or immorality. He is forced to rely upon a seasoning of religion!

It was rather a relief to get to the Théâtre Antoine—the "independent theater" of Paris, where "Oiseaux de Passage" has made a considerable success. Maurice Donnay was also responsible for this play, but in collaboration with Lucien Descaves. It is a simple, easy, "talky" four-act drama, dealing with Nihilism. The heroine is a Nihilist, and perpetually surrounded by anarchists, socialists and refugees. She is loved by an inane Frenchman, whose love-making was so Parisian that it convulsed me. You would have roared to see how he simply jumped with affection at her.

The play is merely meant to air socialistic theories. The heroine had been married before (otherwise she would not have been interesting, even in the Théâtre Libre), and believed her husband to be dead. But in the last act, just as she is about to wed the jumpy young man, she hears that her primary husband is alive, and goes off to join him. In fact, *Vera* was a perfect lady. Luckily there was a white-muslin girl (in whom the Parisians had no possible interest) waiting to console *Julien*.

Perhaps the success of the piece is due to its oddity. Its oddity is that it is quite proper. The question of sex is not accentuated. In Paris this is so extraordinary that "Oiseaux de Passage" may be set down as a curiosity.

"La Montansier," the new play in which Réjane and Coquelin are appearing at the Gaité, and which she is to produce in New York, is a dull and foolish concoction dealing with the love, patriotism and general cussedness of a beautiful actress in the Revolutionary period. The lady has a husband and plenty of lovers, but she is patriotic, and ends quite happily. It is a silly play, conducive to slumber. In it Madame Réjane will win no new admirers. She croaks through the piece like a raven.

FOR BOOK LOVERS

The month's review shows several important books by authors already prominent in the public eye, notably "The Castaway," by Hallie Erminie Rives, and "The Cost," by David Graham Phillips. Nine other books recently published are also noticed.



WHETHER or not the terms of the ninth commandment should be extended so as to cover the relations of novelists to the characters they create is a question which has, perhaps, little practical interest for moralists or theologians. It does seem to us, however, that it should be a rule of literary ethics that authors should maintain such an attitude of impartiality toward the people of their stories as to allow them to think and act for themselves, or, at least, refrain from openly taking sides. It is not to be supposed, of course, that a writer of stories should not feel for and with the actors of his drama. Indeed, the more deeply his sympathies and emotions are involved in his tale, the more vivid and realistic will be the effects produced. But the moment he betrays an animus that can be detected by the reader, the illusion is gone, the characters become puppets, the action mechanical, the setting artificial. The result is an artistic sin, the penalty of which is the exposure of unfounded literary and artistic pretensions.

It is an old-fashioned fault to set up in a novel men and women of straw with human weaknesses and vices merely to make them targets for the shafts of triumphant strength and virtue. As a rule, modern novelists are too sophisticated, whatever may be the defects justly or unjustly imputed to them, to be led into this error. Whether literary conscience is more active in these days, or whether artistic perceptions are keener, is an academic question that can be left

for the discussion of others more interested in such matters; the consequences, at any rate, are obvious.

The responsibility of an author toward his characters is not a mere figment of the imagination which imposes no ethical restrictions. In creating a fictional personality, one imposes upon himself the obligation to administer justice tempered with charity. For lack of self-restraint in this relation begets, if it does not actually demonstrate an already existing, lack of self-restraint toward his neighbors in real life.

They are, all of them, therefore, entitled to a hearing; they have the right to show, if they can, that they are not wholly bad, without being handicapped by attacks against which they can, in the nature of things, offer no defense. In other words, they ought to have the same chances to win approval that are possessed by real men and women under similar conditions. And, on the other hand, it is unjust that they should be loaded down with impossible virtues that rob them of the rewards of a successful fight against human temptations.

"I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate
Nor set down aught in malice."

Fortunately novels in which the author has, himself, openly enlisted are rare. There is a class of books, commonly called "problem novels," which renders self-restraint difficult, for they are written with the conscious purpose of proving or disproving a certain proposition and therefore necessarily develop

into an argument, and the author becomes an advocate with all an advocate's prejudices.

Another example of the same difficulty is encountered in the attempt to introduce historical characters into fiction. A conspicuous failure to meet artistic requirements in this respect was in Mrs. Atherton's portrayal of Hamilton and Jefferson in "The Conqueror," in which the author did justice to neither.

Two books representing these two types and illustrating what we have said are "The Castaway," by Hallie Erminie Rives, Bobbs-Merrill Company, and "The Issues of Life," by Mrs. John Van Vorst, Doubleday, Page & Co., in the first of which the author has recognized her obligation to the people of her story.



It is a little remarkable, considering the way in which historical records have been drawn upon by novel writers, that Lord Byron's hint regarding his own life should have been so long overlooked. It is just a century since he said: "My history will furnish materials for a pretty little romance, which shall be entitled and denominated the loves of Lord B." and it has been left for Hallie Erminie Rives to act upon the suggestion. The result is "The Castaway."

That she has produced a very good story may be due to the quality of the raw material or to her skilled workmanship, or to a combination of both. She has certainly given herself a great advantage in her choice of a hero for her romance, for Byron was not only a versatile lover but a great poet as well, to say nothing of having something of the character of a knight-errant—a mixture full of possibilities for an appreciative novelist. On the other hand, such a character as his necessarily begets temptations to a less restrained novelist than Miss Rives has shown herself to be, to intensify the coloring of the hero's portrait. It seems to us that self-restraint is very nearly the greatest of artistic virtues, and that the author of

"The Castaway" has made use of it is the most striking feature of the book.

That Byron was passionate, reckless and proud, and that he led an irregular life—not to put too fine a point upon it—appears in this story, and is in accord with the known facts; yet these defects are not emphasized at the expense of the virtues which gave him the friendship of men like Shelley, Hobhouse and Sheridan. It cannot be said that too much tenderness has been shown to him, for, though the darker episodes of his life are somewhat veiled—as they should be in deference to the requirements of fiction—yet they are used in giving effect to the moral and emotional consequences to him rather than in making concessions to a supposed popular taste for the details of his amours. Thus is produced the impression that the portrait has been drawn with a due sense of proportion.

And while this has been done without any suggestion of exaggeration, there is a strength of touch, giving to the character a magnetic quality which makes him extremely lifelike.

Some of the other familiar names are Lady Caroline Lamb, Sheridan, Beau Brummel, William Godwin and his daughter Mary, who, after Harriet Shelley's death, married Shelley; Anne Milbanke, for whose separation from Byron, historically unexplained, a reason is given here; Jane Clermont and Teresa Guiccioli. Though they are, of course, all subordinate to the figure of Byron, they are represented with the same art that is shown in his picture. References are made to orgies at Newstead Abbey and to Byron's irregularities while he was living at Venice.

Probably the most fascinating part of the book is the description of Byron's life with Teresa, and there is a pathos about the description which intensifies its human interest.

Howard Chandler Christy has supplied the illustrations, which are all characteristic.



"The Issues of Life" is a typical problem novel, with all the faults of the

type, of which the chief are lack of general atmosphere and artificial characterization. The author sets out to maintain a thesis, and her display of personal prejudice constitutes the most conspicuous feature of the book.

Art is wholly lacking here, for in the contest between the new woman and the old, between the club woman and the home woman, Mrs. Van Vorst has resorted to the old-fashioned method of entering into the fight herself and heaping ridicule, abuse and—we were about to say slander—upon the unhappy characters who represent the new woman's interests. With such a handicap, it is no wonder that the reader is unable to tell just what sort of people they really are.

Excellence of plot and style, beauty of description, is wasted, and all possibility of dramatic strength is lost, for the reader cannot rid himself of the knowledge that the play is being acted out by marionettes.



A literary mystery, still awaiting solution, is the very moderate degree of popularity hitherto accorded to Joseph Conrad's books, at least in this country. When one thinks, in comparison, of the success that has attended some of the books published in the last few years, one would be inclined to be pessimistic were it not for a hope of future appreciation justified, to some extent, by the vicissitudes of some of the masterpieces in the past.

Mr. Conrad's latest book is "Romance," McClure, Phillips & Co. • It differs from his other stories in the possession of a developed and coherent plot and in a greater degree of action. There is also less psychology, though the Conrad method of developing characters by the exposition of what they think and feel rather than by what they do is still conspicuous. The contribution of Ford M. Hueffer, who is credited with collaboration, was apparently in the working out of the plot and in the completion of the story, for, in other respects, the story is Conrad through and through.

The theme is not altogether new. It

deals with the experiences of a young Englishman among pirates and other outcasts in the West Indies. It is, of course, crowded with adventure, but the scenes that stand out most prominently in dramatic interest are the escape of John Kemp from England after becoming involved with smugglers, his escape with Seraphina in the fog from the Casa Riego, and his trial on a charge of piracy after his return to England. He himself is not a conspicuously noteworthy character, but Tomas, Manuel and O'Brien, the "Boss" of Havana, are drawn with all of Conrad's genius.

The story is told with the utmost deliberation of style, a peculiarity that also marks "Heart of Darkness"; but, like that story, it maintains in the reader an almost breathless interest throughout.



To those for whom the mystic philosophy of the East has power to charm, Margaret Horton Potter's book, "The Flame Gatherers," Macmillan, will be a welcome contribution to the season's new novels.

It is, in substance, a combination of two stories, dividing the book into two, entitled respectively "Flesh Fire" and "Soul Fire." The scene is laid in India in the early thirteenth century. The first book tells the story—an old one—of the guilty love of Fida, an Indian prince, taken captive in war, brought home to the conqueror's palace and reduced to slavery, and Ahalya, his master's favorite wife. It ends with their suicide together.

The second book begins with the birth of a boy, Oman, who comes into the world at the moment of the exit of Fida and Ahalya. At their death their souls together take possession of Oman's body; and the second book proceeds to tell of the development of Oman, physically and spiritually, under the influence of the penance paid by the two souls in his body.

Miss Potter has succeeded in handling a difficult and somewhat trite theme with considerable skill. She has avoided the dangers of prolixity and discursiveness

and a temptation to air a good deal of abstruse knowledge irrelevant to the story. She has welded together the incidents of two phases of human nature diametrically opposed to each other into a coherent whole in which the interest is maintained to the very end. The style is easy and natural, and most of the descriptions are notably good.



It seems almost like the irony of fate that a man who bore a prominent part in one of the most romantic periods of history which marked the early years of the United States Navy, whose accomplishments and deeds made him fit to rank with Decatur, Stewart, Hull, Bainbridge and Truxton, should be remembered principally as a defeated captain.

Lieutenant Commander Albert Gleaves, U. S. N., has rendered a service not only to a gallant man, but also to his countrymen, in his book on James Lawrence, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. The book will give currency to the facts connected with Lawrence's life in the infant navy in the war with the Barbary pirates, and his distinguished services in the war of 1812 down to the time of his death in the disastrous battle between the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon*.

As to this fight, the author seems to have succeeded in correcting some popular errors as to the circumstances under which the battle was undertaken by the *Chesapeake*.

Almost every phase of the naval history of the War of 1812 is intensely interesting, and this narrative is worthy of a high place in its literature.



A good detective story has always had a special fascination for almost every class of novel readers, and probably always will have. The difficulty nowadays is to find one that is both good and original. "The Darrow Enigma," by Melvin L. Severy, Dodd, Mead & Co., is surely one.

The enigma is the development into a mystery of a murder, committed al-

most in broad daylight, in a room full of people. There is in this fact, it is true, somewhat of a tax upon the credulity, and the way in which suspicion is transferred from one person to another before it settles on the real criminal is a little trite; but, nevertheless, the tale is so well told that the reader is forced to finish it before laying the book aside.

It hardly needs to be said that by transferring the action to India and the introduction of Indian characters and color adds much to the mystery.



"At the Big House" is a collection of animal folk-tales gathered from Indian and negro sources by Anne Virginia Culbertson and published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company. In general character they are not unlike those of Joel Chandler Harris; indeed, some of the animal tricks and ruses are identical with the performances of Br'er Rabbit. But they are something more than those; for, besides sharing with Mr. Harris' tales the qualities of entertainment and humor, they have the genuine value of traditional stories of a class which ought to be preserved and incorporated into the literature of the language before they are wholly lost, as sooner or later they doubtless will be.



Anna Chapin Ray has been hitherto known chiefly as the author of the "Teddy" stories for older girls, though her second book, "The Dominant Strain," added a good deal to her reputation. Her last work, "By the Good Sainte Anne," Little, Brown & Co., is a good summer love story, not too long, and easy to read, with a simple plot, and, except in one or two particulars, faithfully drawn characters. Cecil Barth does not appear in the story quite as the author seems to have conceived him, for, though he is obviously a first-rate fellow, he does some curiously raw things for an English gentleman; indeed, one cannot help feeling that he never did them at all, especially when Nancy How-

ard herself developed so high a regard for him. Being the girl she was, her judgment in such a matter must have been absolutely sound.



When a novel is so good that one cannot suppress a feeling of regret that it is not still better, it is very apt to mean that the reader's interest has been pretty deeply stirred. This is the case with Maud Wilder Goodwin's "Four Roads to Paradise," published by The Century Company. The book is striking chiefly as a piece of clever character drawing, for in plot it presents few novelties.

The prologue is a quotation from the Talmud: "Four men entered Paradise; one beheld and died, one lost his senses, one destroyed the young plants, one only entered in peace."

The best part of the book consists of the characters of Bishop Alston, who is one of the type of ecclesiastics made familiar by the "Cardinal's Snuffbox" and "The Turquoise Cup"—a kindly old man, thoroughly experienced in the ways of the world, and, therefore, full of sympathy for frail human nature—and Fleming, the lawyer. The latter, with Walford, the young clergyman from the West; Yates, the stockbroker, and Newton, the scientist, are the four men who enter Paradise. Fleming, Walford and Yates are all more or less consistently in love with Anne Blythe, the bishop's niece, a charming young widow, whose unhappy matrimonial experience has left her determined never to try a second experience. Walford is the least attractive of the four, and we wish we could say that he is an impossible character.

Newton's place in the story is not exactly clear, for he seems to have no necessary connection with it beyond filling out the quota of those who, according to the prologue, entered Paradise.



The people in John Oliver Hobbes' new book, "The Vineyard," D. Appleton & Co., are a rather unamiable lot,

with the possible exception of Jennie Sussex, and even she gives one the impression of being a somewhat worldly young woman. They are, however, the sort of people whose doings make a more interesting story than those of more comfortable character.

Gerald Federan was very much of a cad, for he jilted Jennie Sussex, his first sweetheart, for Rachel Tredegar, because the latter was rich, and then tried to swindle her. Rachel belonged to a type of woman which makes much of a condition favoring invalidism because it furnishes an interesting background for a display of what some people would call religious enthusiasm, but most of which was in her case embraced in an ostentatious devotion to Newman's "Apologia." No one is likely to be misled into believing that Gerald and Rachel were in love with each other. There is no doubt of Jennie's affection for Gerald, however, and this furnishes the only love element in the story.



Another stirring tale of modern strenuous business life is "The Cost," by David Graham Phillips, published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

The scene of the opening chapters is in one of the Western colleges—Northwestern University, if we may judge by local color and college expressions. There the reader is introduced to the chief actors, and there are collected the elements of the drama which follows. Pauline, contracting a clandestine marriage with Dumont; Scarborough, who, even as a youth, is accumulating the strength and experience which carry him through the stress of later professional and political life, and Dumont, who begins to disclose the qualities which bring unhappiness to others and ruin to himself, are put upon the stage.

A stormy life in Wall Street for Dumont and in Indiana politics for Scarborough follows, the former involved in business and private scandals, and the latter elected to the governorship.

The story abounds in dramatic situations, and the action is rapid. There is not a dull page in the book.